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Welcome to... THE Scots MAGAZINE

Get Snapping



I'm pretty sure that this time last year on this page, I published a photo of a temperature inversion from a day out hillwalking in the Arrochar Alps.

An inversion happens when a layer of cold is trapped beneath warmer air. It's grey and murky in the glens, but the hilltops are bathed in warm sunshine.

This time, I've done the opposite... the above shot is from within the freezing fog layer of an inversion. It was taken recently on a daily dog walk near my home in the Trossachs.

At a few dozen feet above sea level it was, as you can see, murky and cold, with the frosty grass crunching underfoot.

Through the gloom that surrounded us, the weak sun was a promise that the layer of murk wasn't too thick – and so it proved to be.

The wee summit we were aiming for is only about 1000ft. At the top, bathed in sun warm enough for just a T-shirt, we lolled around, gazing down on a grey blanket that filled the Forth Valley from Killearn to Stirling like a still, inland sea. Not bad for a wee dog walk!

I'm no photographer, so if you think you can do better than my effort above – and I'm sure you can – then you should really be entering our Photographer of the Year competition.

And this February issue is your last chance to do so. We're accepting entries on any Scottish theme – whether wildlife, landscape, cityscape or event, or anything else you can think of. Give it a go – turn to page 62 for the full details.

Elsewhere, we've a bit of a St Valentine's theme going on in this issue. In our Big Interview, Hollywood actor Richard E Grant remembers the love of his life, his Scots wife, the late dialect coach Joan Washington.

We bring you the romantic tale behind the founding of the famous Nikka Japanese whisky firm and we also explore the links between St Valentine and Scotland – did you know the bones of the saint's forearm are held in a casket in a Glasgow church? Well, now you do. Turn to page 67 to find out more!

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FEBRUARY 2023

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smourich

A kiss



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Have a go at disc
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AYE!

Roses were first
commercially
hybridised
by Perth nursery
Dickson & Brown
in 1793.



More amazing
Scottish facts
page **136**



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Meet Your Writers



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of the Year 2017

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(Highly Commended),
2019, 2018, 2016, 2015

Scottish Media Brand of
the Year 2019, 2018

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2018
PPA Scotland Magazine
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Best Specialist Local
News Site 2018
The Drum Online Media
Awards

Lifestyle Magazine of the
Year 2017
ACE Newspaper and
Magazine Awards



Ruth Connell

Ruth was born in the Central Belt town of Falkirk and grew up on her father's farm just outside Bonnybridge. Although the Scots ballerina turned actress – who's famous for her appearances on hit US TV shows *Doom Patrol* and *Supernatural* – now lives in America, she has fond memories of her home country. Here she reveals her favourite places from across Scotland. *See page 8*



Tessa Williams

Journalist, actor, radio presenter and author of hit books *Cult Perfumes* and *Hotels Of The Stars*, Tessa's an expert on the Scottish arts, culture and fashion scene, and passionate about travel. This month she chats with Hollywood star Richard E Grant about his moving memoir, which commemorates his 38-year marriage to his late Scottish wife Joan. *See page 30*



Jim Crumley

Highly-acclaimed journalist and author, whom many regard as the best wildlife writer in Scotland. Jim, author of more than 30 books, is an avid advocate for the reintroduction of extinct native species. He's been our wildlife expert for more than a decade. This month, Jim explains why we should be letting wildlife manage wildlife, without any human intervention. *See page 56*



Morag Lindsay

A journalist and commentator based in rural Perthshire, Morag is head of comment for *The Courier* newspaper. This month in *The Scots Magazine*, she visits an award-winning Scottish primary school which has been making headlines thanks to its support of pupils with ADHD. Making these small changes has transformed life for all pupils at Strathmore Primary. *See page 38*



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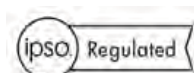
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**RUTH
CONNELL**

my Scotland

Actress and star of hit US TV shows *Doom Patrol* and *Supernatural* on her favourite Scottish spots



“I have so many childhood memories of being at Callendar Park with my nana”

Callendar Park in Falkirk is springing to mind from my childhood. I have so many memories of being on the roundabout with my nana, she lived at Maxwell Tower there. One of my best friends even got married there.



Glasgow Green is the centre of things – I've seen so many plays where it's mentioned. There are songs written about it, you see concerts there. I think a lot of good, down-to-earth Scottish people have convened there.



“I’ll always take a picture of Edinburgh Castle”

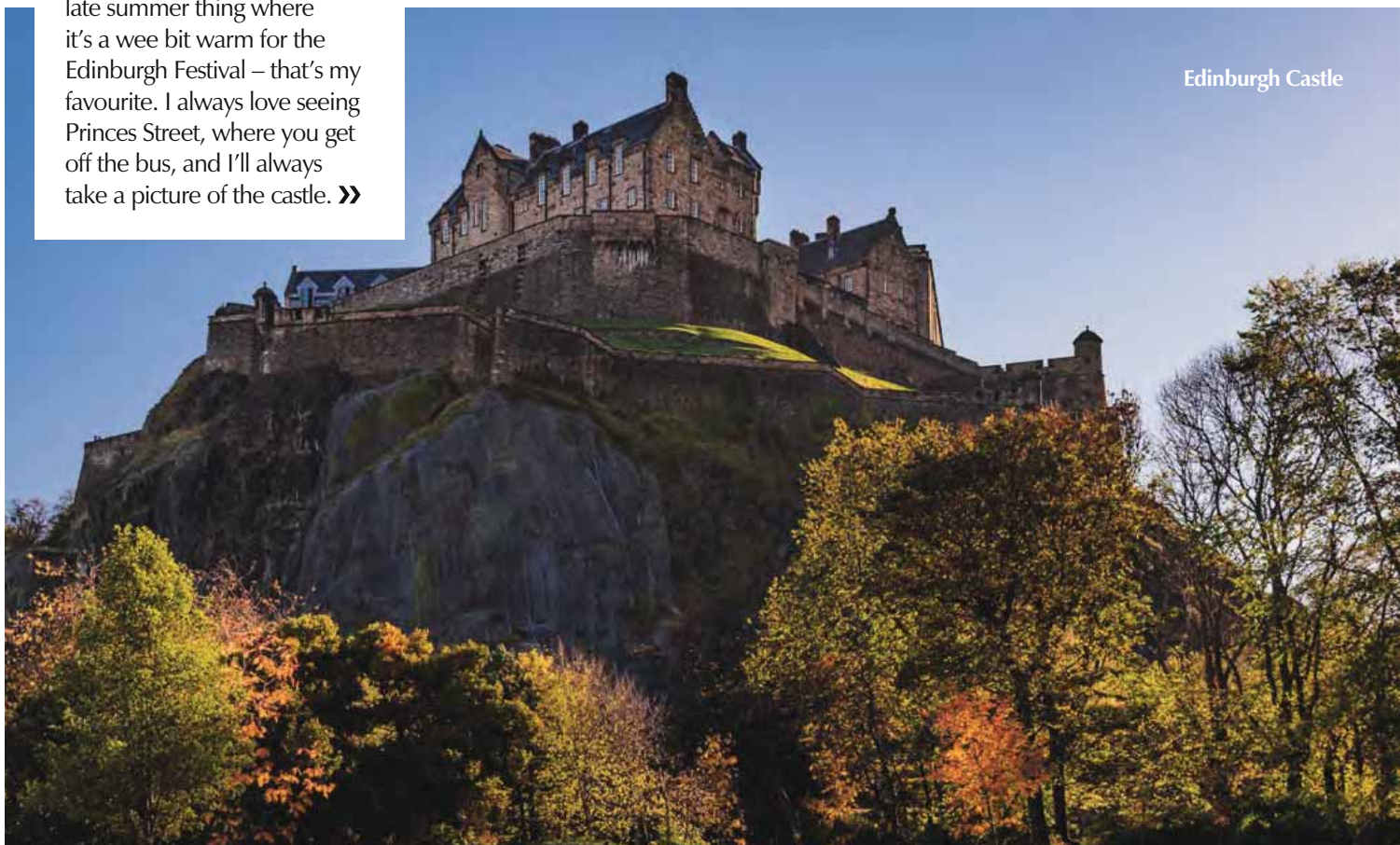


Callendar Park



Edinburgh Festival

Summer turning into autumn is my favourite time. Because it's not that bitterly cold yet and there's a chance of that late summer thing where it's a wee bit warm for the Edinburgh Festival – that's my favourite. I always love seeing Princes Street, where you get off the bus, and I'll always take a picture of the castle. >>



Edinburgh Castle

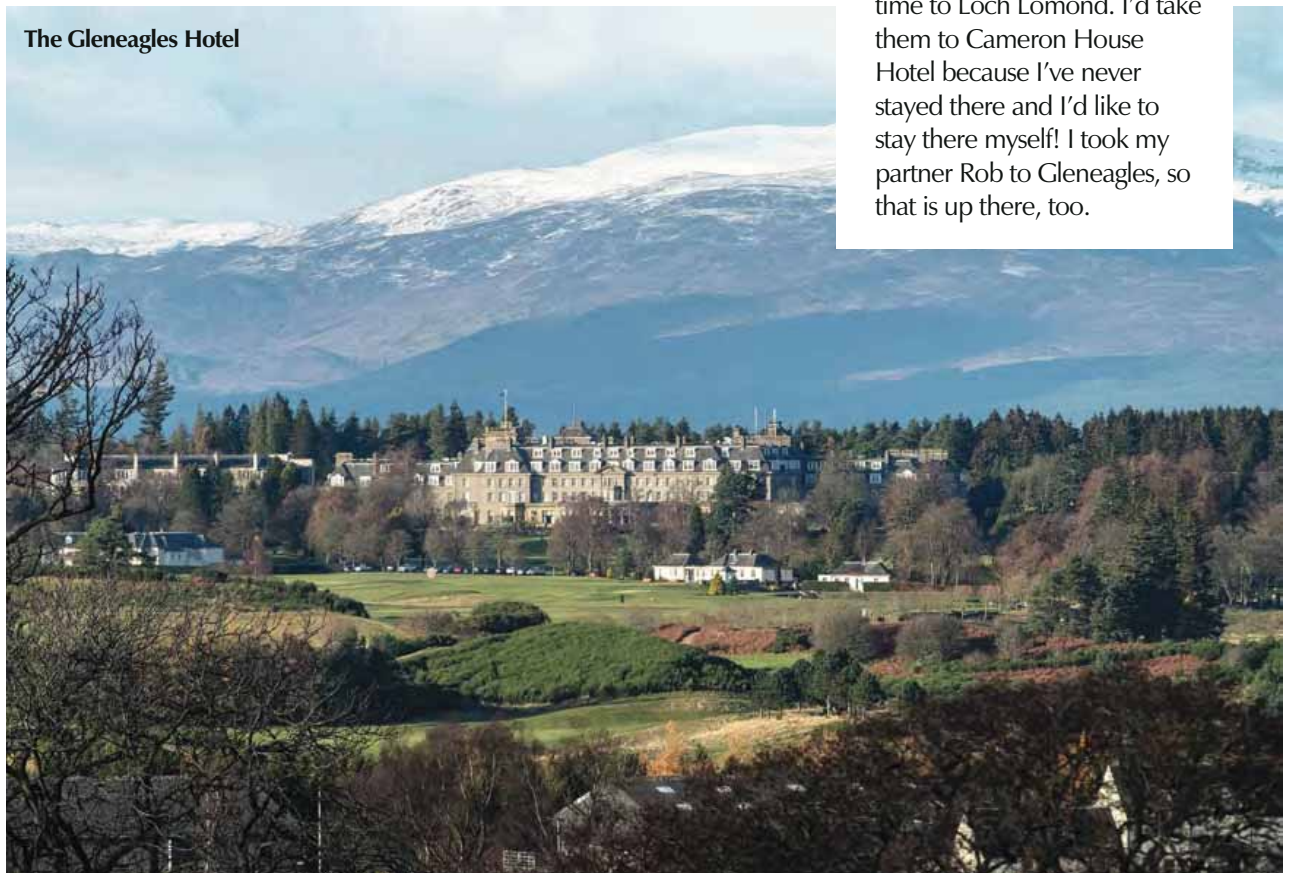
An aerial photograph of Loch Lomond, a large body of water surrounded by dense green forests and mountains. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape. A small island with trees is visible in the middle of the lake.

“I’d take somebody visiting Scotland for the first time to Loch Lomond”

Loch Lomond

I would take somebody visiting Scotland for the first time to Loch Lomond. I’d take them to Cameron House Hotel because I’ve never stayed there and I’d like to stay there myself! I took my partner Rob to Gleneagles, so that is up there, too.

The Gleneagles Hotel





I have fond memories of Dollar Park. I would go into the old folks' home near the park with my nana, her brother and my uncle. I've always loved spending time with older people – they'd be playing darts or bowls or whatever, and I'd be hanging out.

My mum was a guidance teacher and we went to the Isle of Mull on a retreat with the kids she was working with. Years later I actually bought my *Supernatural* co-star Jensen Ackles some whisky from Mull. I shared a lot of whisky with the *Supernatural* boys – Jensen and Jared Padalecki – and my partner Rob Benedict. They all appreciated that part of Scotland – the real spirit of Scotland! 🍷



**Knockvologan Beach,
Isle of Mull**

Words: SCOTT PATERSON Pictures: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY

#OutAndAboutScotland

We live in a fabulous country for adventures.
Share yours with our social media hashtag...

@StuartRamsay39

A cold start to the day here on the Cartland Craigs. This is the view back over the valley to Lanark.



@eadietam

Loch Tulla, Bridge of Orchy. #outandaboutScotland



Cliff Hands Photography

You've just gotta love Glencoe with its weather diversity. #outandaboutScotland



@strathspey.lodge

The beautiful night sky of the Cairngorms.



@Agzygroove

Today's beaut of a stroll – the Graham Tom Meadhoin in Ballachulish. Outstanding views!



Bob Smith

Ayr Pier on a balmy winter day, 18 degrees and 25mph winds!



@Jontafkasi

Bealach na Bà – what an incredible, iconic climb. I loved every second of it despite the wind and the rain. Beautiful.





@ilona_turnbull
Sgùrr Gaorsaic, GlenAffric.



@photography_byjem
The Hector MacDonald monument from above. Dingwall, Highlands.



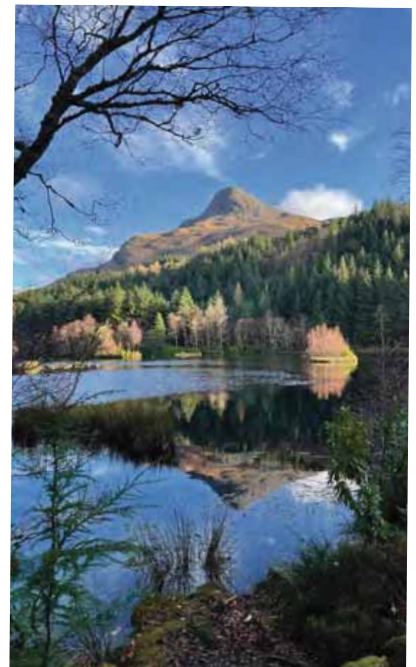
@BurtBlurt

I was lucky enough to have one of the support crew of Velo Cartel Cycling Tours catch me on the hairpins during our NC500. Not so lucky with the weather, but it added to the experience.



Christine Shanks

The Pap of Glencoe with reflection.



@shonarenicksphotography
Another shot of one of the Kelpies through the mist.



@eastlothianharewhisperer
A grey seal lingers as the light goes.



Share your #OutAndAboutScotland pics with us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram for a chance to be featured next month!

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Discover @Scots_Magazine

Head to Instagram to meet the team
behind *The Scots Magazine*!



▲ Assistant production editor Catriona and her two boys took a frosty walk around Monikie Country Park – the park's resident ducks came flocking when they saw the bags of duck food they'd bought.

The Scots Magazine team went on a walk around Airthrey Loch and Hermitage Woods in the grounds of Stirling University. The six-kilometre circuit was perfect for a stroll before lunch and the climb up to the fabulous views to the Wallace monument – that you can just see through the trees in the photo – certainly helped work up an appetite for lunch! ▼



▲ Production editor Rachel enjoyed a walk around Ravenscraig Park in Kirkcaldy which took her along to Dysart Harbour through an ominous looking tunnel in the cliff. On the other side is the pretty harbour that was used in the filming of *Outlander*.



▼ The recent intense cold snap turned the Trossachs into a winter wonderland. Editor Robert passes this beautiful waterfall on his daily lunchtime dog walks, but this was the first time he's seen it frozen. Now that is cold!

Legendary Scotland

The latest nugget of intriguing
Scottish history from our friends
at @LegendaryScotland



Penguin Parade

The famous Edinburgh Zoo Penguin Parade, which sees its black-and-white waddlers take a leisurely stroll among visitors, was inspired by an escapee.

In the 1950s, a keeper accidentally left the gate of the penguin enclosure ajar, and a curious gentoo penguin thought he'd investigate life beyond the pool.

He sauntered through the gate, and his chums quickly followed. Their keeper turned to find them all marching behind him, much to the delight of onlookers, and it was the inadvertent inaugural Penguin Parade.

It became a daily fixture but, back then, the zoo's penguins sometimes ventured much further than the official parade route.

They could sometimes be seen tootling around on Corstorphine Road before arriving for a police-escorted meander around the city centre.

The parade operates on an entirely voluntary basis. It is the penguins' choice to take part in the expedition.

Imagine getting the bus along Princes Street and seeing a gang of penguins congregated outside the Royal Scottish Academy... though nothing would surprise us these days, really.



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A Wee Blether With...

Logan Hannah

The Scots motorsport racer talks about career goals and gender equality in the sport



Above: Logan with her racing car



Left: In the driver's seat

What inspired you to take up racing?

I used to live in the Middle East and motorsport is very big out there. My dad started racing as a hobby and, being his eldest daughter, I followed him everywhere! I had to convince him to let me have a shot – but once I sat in a go-kart and enjoyed it, we just never looked back.

How do you feel before a race?

I try to keep myself quite relaxed. I keep myself to myself and really try to focus on the task at hand, rather than standing chatting to people. I'll happily sit in the car with my headphones on and get my concentration up to the point it needs to be at.

How do you combine the sport with your university studies?

With uni not running in the summer and motorsport being more of a summer sport, most of my driving is done while I'm not studying. Trying to balance exams and lectures is quite difficult, but I've done all right for the last two years, so I'm just trying to keep it up as I'm now in my third year.

How did it feel to win the national David Leslie Trophy in 2020?

It was surreal! To be the first female to win it was fantastic, considering some of the other names that are on the trophy. It was such a good weekend that led into another two good weekends down south. It's just a matter of keeping the ball rolling and keeping yourself grounded before another race weekend.

Have you noticed more women in motorsport?

Definitely. When I was younger, there were only one or two females at a high

enough level to be able to call them role models. In the GB4 Championship, there are four women – the first three drivers that were announced were female. Steps are being taken in the right direction, but there's more to do.

Do you have any advice for women looking to take up the sport?

Make sure it's something you want to do and, if it is, nothing should stop you or get in the way of achieving that. In motorsport you end up with more lows than you do highs, so it's about being able to build on those lows and those mistakes, and trying to enjoy the highs more.

Where is your favourite place to race?

I'll be home proud and say Knockhill because I work there – I see that place in my sleep! Silverstone GP was fantastic. It's a quick track, super-wide, and racing on an F1 grand prix circuit was fantastic. Donington Park is another favourite.

How do you wind down?

If it's after a race weekend, normally I travel on my own. Being based in Glasgow, a five-hour drive usually tends to do it. Keeping busy or going to the gym, enjoying family time and seeing my friends is really important to me – it keeps me grounded.

What are your hopes for the future?

Near future, I'm hoping to make a bit more of a splash – we're more than capable of that. My dream is to race at Le Mans and stand on the podium. I hope to do that in the near-ish future or make the steps to go that way. That is the ultimate goal. 



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Around Scotland

Your pick of the top events from across the country

by HANNAH McLAREN

The Love Of Print

Until March 12, Kelvingrove Art Museum, Glasgow

This exciting exhibition is a celebration of 50 years of printmaking at Glasgow Print Studio (GPS), with around 225 works from more than 130 artists. Since 1972, thousands of artists have made prints at GPS, including Turner Prize winners and nominees. The display includes well-known artists, and spans five decades of work.

www.whatsonglasgow.co.uk/event/112178-the-love-of-print



Queen Extravaganza

February 20, SEC Armadillo, Glasgow

The official tribute band, produced by Queen stars Roger Taylor and Brian May, returns to the UK following worldwide sell-out shows. It's a rolling cast of gifted musicians who have been hand-picked by the two original band members. This 90-minute show features more than 20 Queen classics, including the band's biggest hits.

www.whatsonglasgow.co.uk/event/086928-queen-extravaganza >>



The Tiger Who Came To Tea

February 21-22, King's Theatre, Glasgow

The Olivier Award-nominated show returns on tour, celebrating more than 10 years on stage. The doorbell rings just as Sophie and her mummy are sitting down to tea. Who could it possibly be? Join the tea-guzzling tiger in this delightful family show, packed with magic, sing-a-long songs and teatime mayhem!

tigerstealive.com



The Scottish Caravan And Outdoor Leisure Show

February 2-5, SEC, Glasgow

This annual event returns – expect the latest caravans, motorhomes and holiday homes to be on display, with more than 100 exhibitors attending. Camping and marine products will also feature. Plan your next adventure at Scotland's largest caravan, motorhome and holiday home show.

www.caravanshowscotland.com



Strictly Come Dancing – The Live Tour

February 10-12, OVO Hydro, Glasgow

Start the year off on the right foot! First staged in 2008, *Strictly Come Dancing – The Live Tour* brings all the joy of the popular BBC One TV show to arenas around the UK. Anton Du Beke will join fellow TV judges Shirley Ballas and Craig Revel Horwood for 30 supersized, sequin-filled shows. Keep dancing!

www.ovohydro.com

The Bodyguard – The Musical

**February 20-25,
Edinburgh Playhouse**

This breathtakingly romantic thriller features a whole host of irresistible classic songs, including *Queen Of The Night*, *So Emotional*, *One Moment In Time*, *Saving All My Love*, *Run To You*, *I Have Nothing*, *Greatest Love Of All*, *Million Dollar Bill*, *I Wanna Dance With Somebody* and one of the greatest hit songs of all time – *I Will Always Love You*.

www.thebodyguardmusical.com/uk-tour





Inverness Fiddler's Rally

February 25, Inverness

Inverness Fiddlers will be joined by players from all over Scotland and beyond. The aim is create an orchestra of more than 100 musicians. Special guests for the 2023 rally will be acclaimed accordionist Matthew MacLennan and Nairn-based a cappella singing group, The Broads.

www.invernessfiddlers.org/index.asp?pageid=294186



Scottish Wedding Show

February 18-19, SEC, Glasgow

This popular event exhibits more than 220 of the UK's leading wedding suppliers, offering a wide range of ideas for your special day! Enjoy the Let's Talk Tying The Knot Q&A stage, where industry experts and trendsetters will share their top tips. And don't miss the catwalk shows for the trendiest attire. Sample performers at the live band showcase, and taste-test a bespoke cocktail or glass of fizz at the Prosecco & Cocktail Bar.

www.thescottishweddingshow.com

WORKSHOPS

Four-Week Pottery Course & Exhibition

From February 2, Wick High Street

A crash course in ceramics – from hand building to using the pottery wheel and creating sculptures, then glazing and finishing off your pieces for a mini show at the end of the four weeks!

www.hannahcambridge.co.uk/workshopschedule



Beginner's Yoga – Welcome To Feeling Better

February 20 - March 27, Newlands South Church, Glasgow

Do you suffer from back aches, anxiety or insomnia?

Yoga could help you, so why not try before you commit. Enjoy a 75-minute class to gently ease away aches and pains, allow your mind to settle and enjoy some soothing relaxation.

www.luciepotteryoga.co.uk/why-yoga/beginner



Feng Shui Workshop

Dates available until March 25, Bridgend Farmhouse Café, Edinburgh

During an intensive three-day event over three weekends, learn the concepts of feng shui – an ancient Asian tradition

that seeks harmony between the natural elements in the dedicated spaces of home and work. You will learn how to rectify misalignment and boost positive influence by harnessing the qi – or energy – that flows in all living spaces.

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/feng-shui-workshop-session-1-tickets-454909104377 





A Warm Welcome

Scottish theatre hoping to entice audiences with an exciting new season

by PAUL FISHER COCKBURN

DAVID GREIG, artistic director at Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum Theatre, is "thrilled" to have pulled a season together.

"We've all been locked away – well, it feels like we've been locked away – for years," he says. "We still had pandemic shut-downs in spring 2022, so for us to be in a position of offering five new shows – and they're exciting, big, interesting shows – I'm really, really proud of that.

"The pandemic was about keeping us all apart, wasn't it? Socially distanced. Well, the new crisis is that we need to all sit close to each other and get warm – so come into the theatre and have the warmth of community, the warmth of enjoyment, the warmth of story," he says.

To help those who may have got "out of the habit" of enjoying theatre, this season starts with a new slant on an old favourite.

"Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is just such a magnificent play – it's 'the Scottish Play', isn't it?" David says.

"I've always felt that any artistic director gets one go at *Macbeth* – you can't do it twice in your reign, so you need to do the right thing.

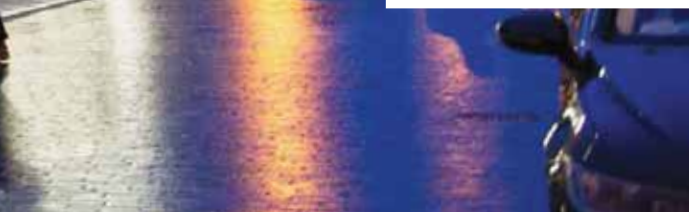
"I've had endless proposals for different types of *Macbeth*, none of which had really felt to me like they were the right one. Particularly in this day and age, you can't just wheel out a play – you have to have a reason why you're doing it."



Main: Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh

Left: David Greig

Below: *Macbeth* (An Undoing)



It was Lyceum associate artist Zinnie Harris who finally provided David with the *Macbeth* he wanted – or rather *Macbeth (An Undoing)*.

“It’s very much Shakespeare’s words, but it’s Zinnie exploring the character of Lady Macbeth.

“She’s one of the greatest Shakespearian female characters – and yet she disappears, basically, about halfway through the play. That’s such a disappointment, both for the actress and for the audience. So essentially Zinnie is saying, ‘What if she didn’t?’”

Zinnie has “previous” in this area, having written acclaimed adaptations of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, Webster’s *The Duchess Of Malfi*, and the Greek classic *The Oresteia* (in her trilogy *This Restless House*) – all of which played on the Lyceum’s stage.

“She’s really got into her stride,” says David. “When you go to see her work, you’re seeing both the weight and original drama and classic nature of it, but you also get this added spice of Zinnie’s take on the women, which I always think is really exciting.”

It’s precisely this kind of “exciting” that he hopes will bring audiences back to the Lyceum. “On one hand, I’m saying, ‘Remember how good theatre is, remember what

it feels like to be sharing a story in a room, and how that’s different from watching Netflix on your laptop.’

“On the other side I would say this – Scottish culture and Scottish cultural institutions right now are facing a pretty deadly crisis because the pandemic, followed by the cost of living crisis, has affected us as well.

“I could pile up a list of woe, but the truth is that theatre is so intrinsic to the human psyche, it will not go away. It’s not theatre that’s in danger, it’s the people who make theatre,” David says. “I would really like to encourage people to consider coming back and giving the Lyceum a go for one or all of these shows.

“Right now we really, really need the audience – we need people to remember what they love about theatre. They’ve got a bit out of the habit.”

***Macbeth (An Undoing)*, is at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, February 4 – 25. »**

Pictures: ALAMY, LAURENCE WINRAM, REBECCA NEED-MENEAR, ALY WIGHT, PETER DIBDIN

THE 2023 SEASON

You Bury Me

March 7 – 18

Very much following the story of the aftermath of the Arab Spring uprising in Egypt, this play by an Egyptian writer – known by their pseudonym Ahlam – has very strong Scottish connections. “I think it is reasonable to say that this is a new Scottish play just as much as it’s a new Egyptian play,” says David.

“The story appeals to me for a number of reasons. It’s just a great play about young people in a city facing the future – life, love, hope, despair. For me, it’s the beauty and melancholy of these young people in the city – it’s a love letter to the city, and I think it’s really good. I’m excited about that.”



Anna Karenina

May 13 – June 3

British/Russian director Polina Kalinina and Scottish actress and writer Lesley Hart – a regular face in the BBC’s *River City* – both love this novel, but have worked to deliver a fantastic adaptation that has a Scottish voice. “It’s not in Scots language, it’s not set in Scotland. It’s still set in Russia, but it has a really strong Scottish flavour, and that’s a way of getting into its Russianness,” says David. “It’s really theatrical, it zips along at very high speed, and it’s just the most beautiful love story. Well, I say ‘beautiful’ – it’s tormented, it’s melodrama, it’s just a great story about passion and I think it will be an absolute treat.”



Kidnapped

April 11 – 22

Writer Isobel McArthur and musical supervisor Michael John McCarthy gave us the Olivier award-winning *Pride & Prejudice** (*sort of) – and this new take on Robert Louis Stevenson’s swashbuckling tale of pirates, Jacobites and (mis)adventure comes with a live soundtrack of 20th-century pop music performed by a dynamic ensemble of actor-musicians. It’s been described in some press articles already as a “rom-com”, but for David it’s more of a “road movie” combining the novel and the story of Stevenson’s wife, Frances. “The thing with Isobel’s work, it’s always faithful and yet funny. It’s always contemporary, but actually more honest to the past than sometimes when you get just a ‘frock and kilt’ adaptation,” says David.

Castle Lennox

March 30 – April 1

For three days, the Lyceum gives over its stage to the acclaimed Edinburgh-based Lung Ha Theatre Company. “Lung Ha are fantastic,” says David. “They’re an ensemble of actors who have learning difficulties, who have been working together making classic and new work for about 20 years, under their director Maria Oller. As a story told by and about people with learning difficulties, the really important thing is the way in which – as recently as 50 years ago, within living memory – asylums like Lennox Castle were where people were essentially imprisoned. Written by Linda McLean, it’s a terrific play. It’s got music through it, and I think it’s going to be a really moving, exciting, dramatic piece of theatre.”



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Head For The Hills

Fort William Mountain Festival is back to fuel a sense of adventure in everyone, celebrating the very best of Scotland's great outdoors

by PAUL FISHER COCKBURN

LIKE many people, Anna Danby has long loved the Scottish Highlands, but what's more unusual is that the Fort William Mountain Festival is one of the reasons she now lives in the area.

"I was in Edinburgh for a long time," she says, "but spent as much time as I could in the Highlands.

"Since 2015, I used to come up every winter – I'd get a self-catering place for a week with friends, so we could enjoy the hills during the day and go and see the festival's films and speakers in the evening.

"It's very community-based – I could see a real community of like-minded people."

Not only did Anna move to what's known as "the outdoor capital of the UK", she also joined the team of enthusiastic volunteers who have been organising the festival for two decades now.

"The festival programme is a combination of talks, film screenings and workshops that give people the opportunity to get out and explore. It covers everything from mindful walking to winter climbing – a huge spectrum of topics. It's a celebration of everything that outdoor adventures offer."

And the festival isn't just for those "operating at what some might see as the extreme end of 'adventure'," as Anna puts it.

"Our aim is to create a programme that offers people from all walks of life the opportunity to get involved – whether that's a local person who has a passing interest in the outdoors, or the people who are real dedicated winter climbers.

"We have events targeted at families and young people as well – there's something for everybody."

"Get involved – whatever your experience"





Skiers in the Nevis range



Ben Nevis (left) from Buachaille Etive Beag

For instance, the daytime programme includes events focusing on mindful walking, nature writing, outdoor swimming, trail running, mountain biking, paddle boarding and, of course, winter walking, mountaineering and skiing.

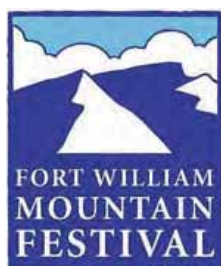
Many of these events are free, and all are sure to fuel your sense of adventure.

In the evenings, there's a choice of inspiring speakers – such as Robbie Phillips, one of the UK's top all-round climbers and adventurers – while the Scottish Mountaineering Press will be hosting a Winter Climbing Forum where you can quiz the experts on how to get the best out of the hills.

There will be a unique line-up of biking, snow sports and paddle-sports films – including, on the Sunday afternoon, a free film event featuring local families.

A specially-curated international film night will showcase the best entries to the festival's own competition, seeking the best adventure filmmaking and photography.

And new for this year is The Golden Axe Award, established in memory of the late Rob Brown, a festival team member who was a proud and avid filmmaker. This competition will be a very special way to remember him.



Further Information

Fort William Mountain Festival February 16-19

▲ mountainfestival.co.uk

Isle of Arran Mountain Festival May 12-15

"Small groups, big walks, huge fun!" An opportunity to meet like-minded people, discover a fascinating island and have unforgettable days in the safe hands of experienced local leaders.

▲ www.arranmountainfestival.co.uk

Ballater Walking Festival 2023 June 3-9

Offering a programme of walks, with professional guides and volunteer leaders eager to show you around.

▲ www.walkballater.com

Braemar Mountain Festival March 2-5

Promising "a celebration of the mountains in winter" – including workshops and talks on an eclectic mix of subjects from engaging speakers and esteemed mountaineers.

▲ braemarmountainfestival.com



Entries are invited from filmmakers of every kind and the only rules are that the film can be no longer than two minutes and must include bright colours, outdoor adventure and food!

"Our hope is that we have curated a programme that truly offers people from all walks of life the opportunity to come along and get involved," Anna says.

"The overriding aims of the festival are to encourage everyone to be inspired by, respect and protect our natural landscape, and we are confident that any visitors will leave feeling motivated to do just that.

"It is a privilege to be part of organising such a diverse program, bringing together everyday adventurers, elite athletes, mountain professionals and local residents on the same stage," says Anna.

"Anybody with a bit of an interest in the outdoors can find something, come along and get involved – whatever your passion and experience." S

A Labour Of Love

Celebrated actor says writing his moving memoir commemorating his 38-year marriage to Scots wife Joan helped him through his grief

by TESSA WILLIAMS

RICHARD E GRANT'S love of Scotland knows no bounds.

Launching his recent stage show and book tour – *An Evening With Richard E Grant* – in Edinburgh's Sheraton Grand Hotel, he seems relaxed and cheery, and clearly adores being in the capital.

Of course, it's no surprise he loves Scotland so much, as his dear wife – Joan Washington, about whom the book *A Pocketful Of Happiness* is written – hailed from Aberdeen.

Joan's death from lung cancer in 2021, aged 74, prompted Richard to begin writing a homage to their enduring love.

"It was a conversation that started in 1982 and went on to her last breath in September 2021," he says.

Dressed in a smart navy shirt, dark jeans and lace-up boots, he still has the gregarious stamp of the man we all know and love from his character in *Withnail And I*, the cult classic film by Bruce Robinson that propelled him to fame in 1987.

The celebrated actor is a scent obsessive and now has a collection of fragrances that he has designed available all around the world.

Doing a round of interviews at London's chic

Langham Hotel back in 2016 to promote his new unisex perfume range, Jack, Richard's groundedness and humility was obvious.

Sitting with a rolled-up plastic bag full of his perfumes and samples, this was no exaggerated pretentiousness – as the sole investor in his range he couldn't afford to give away any samples, the actor just carried them around in the supermarket carrier bag.

Fast-forward six years and his life has changed dramatically on the outside.

Oscar-nominated for his role in the award-winning *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* with Melissa McCarthy in 2019, he's since had parts in *Star Wars: The Rise Of Skywalker*, *Loki*, *Girls*, *Downton Abbey* and TV juggernaut *Game Of Thrones*.

However, the most fundamental change to Richard's life since 2016 is that he has lost his beloved wife, who he was with for nearly 38 years. These days, it is rare that couples stay together for more than 30 years, but in showbiz? It's almost unheard of.

Joan's dying wish was that Richard and their daughter Olivia were to have a pocketful of happiness every day, a wish which lends itself to the title of his moving and hilarious memoir. »

"I'll be visiting Scotland more and reminiscing on the times I enjoyed with Joan there"



The Gorbals



Richard with his daughter Olivia

And Richard believes Scotland had an impact on him from the minute he moved to the UK.

"When I came from Africa to England in 1982, the plane I was on was called *The Glasgow Herald*. When it landed at Heathrow, the first thing I did was buy *The Stage* newspaper where I saw an advert for the Glasgow Citizens Theatre," he says.

"I knew the Citizens well as I had avidly followed it via Cordelia Oliver's reviews in *Plays And Players* magazine."

Richard did try to join the Citizens in the 1980s and auditioned with 600 other young hopefuls. However, after three weeks – and being short-listed in the last 20, 11 of which were chosen – he didn't get in.

So for him, it was back on the train south to be a waiter in London's Covent Garden, trying for another acting break.

That summer Richard went to the Edinburgh Festival

and was bowled over by the talent and beauty he found in Scotland's capital city, cementing his desire to be an actor.

Later that year he enrolled on a six-week course at The Actors Centre in London's Soho, where he met his future wife Joan Washington. She was coaching actors to do regional accents. Richard says, "I begged her for private classes, and she agreed that I could pay £12 per session rather than £20, as I was broke. She quipped, 'You'll owe me if you ever make it as an actor!'"

A few months later Joan contacted Richard again to

DID YOU KNOW?

Richard wrote and directed the 2005 film *Wah-Wah*, loosely based on his childhood experiences in Swaziland. The film took him more than seven years to complete and he kept a diary of the experience, later published as a book – *The Wah-Wah Diaries*.

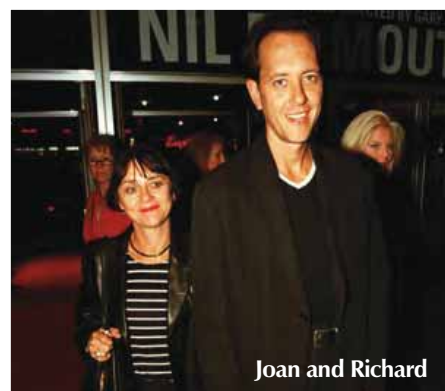


Gabriel Byrne Emily Watson Julie Walters Nicholas Hoult and Miranda Richardson

"An extraordinary portrait of the last shining hours of the British Empire"



*“The first thing I did
was buy *The Stage*
newspaper”*



record a script that required a SiSwati speaker – a South African language – for a play at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

“I went over for dinner that night, taped the script and didn’t go home. It was the beginning of a conversation with her that lasted 38 years,” Richard says.

“She was born Joan Geddie, her father was a doctor and her mother a nurse. Joan was the only person in her family who went into showbusiness.

“She worked as a waitress at the Washington Café on Aberdeen’s seafront as a student and her first husband had the same name, which she kept professionally.”

Joan then trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London, which is why she lost her Aberdonian accent to adopt what was then called Received Pronunciation.

However, Joan used her Aberdeen roots when she needed to.

“Whenever we were bargaining at antique fairs,

she’d speak in the broadest Aberdonian accent possible and it always worked,” he says.

Richard’s childhood piano teacher Bunny Barnes was also Scottish, from Edinburgh.

“She taught me three words which made Joan howl with laughter when we first got together – oxters, doup and teuchter!

“One time Joan and I were on a train to Glasgow – it was the first time I really understood how skilled she was in identifying accents. She was like a female Henry Higgins.

“The people sitting opposite us on the train got chatting and asked what we both did for work. Joan then identified precisely where each person had grown up, and which suburb of Glasgow they were from. They were gobsmacked by her accuracy,” Richard says.

“Not only was she an extraordinary phonetician, she was also a gifted teacher who made you believe you were capable of doing something that seemed impossible. »



*“I went for dinner,
taped the script and
didn’t go home”*



“Whether she was coaching Cate Blanchett or Jessica Chastain, or doing accents for Prince Charles – who loved *The Goon Show* with Spike Milligan and Peter Sellers – she treated everyone equally. Prince or pauper – as I was when we first met,” Richard says.

Three years after their initial meeting, Richard went home to Africa for Christmas for the first time and they wrote to one another three times a day.

He bought the most expensive ring he couldn’t afford and proposed to her on his return at 6am in Heathrow airport, beside his luggage trolley.

He says, “She accepted and, after I’d completed filming my breakthrough role in *Withnail And I* in 1986, we got married on November 1.

“In 1988, we did a trip across Scotland, as she wanted me to experience it properly. I asked whether people said

‘aye’ a lot, and she said ‘never’. As we crossed the border, I stopped to ask for directions and the man pointed to the left and said, ‘Aye, it’s that way!’”

Four days before she died, Joan charged Richard and the couple’s daughter to try to find a pocketful of happiness in each day.

“It has been the mantra by which we have navigated the abyss of grief over the past year. It’s also given us permission to embrace moments of joy and delight again, without feeling guilty.

“Writing this memoir, based on my diaries, was the closest I could get to resurrecting and keeping Joan’s spirit alive. Going back to the days when we first got together and how our careers and private lives intersected across four decades,” he says.

“We became great friends with Annie Lennox over the years, and Joan and Annie delighted in comparing notes about the teachers they had in common from their schooldays in Aberdeen.

“*Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This)* always played on my Walkman as I took the Tube home after waitering every night in early 1983 – and it feels like a dream come true that I succeeded in making a career as an actor, falling in love with a Scottish woman and becoming friends with the Aberdonian singer of this iconic anthem.

“As the years go by, I will be revisiting Scotland more and reminiscing on the times I enjoyed with Joan there,” Richard says. 

FASCINATING FACTS

He is a dual citizen of the UK and Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland. He wears two watches, with one permanently set to Eswatini time.

Richard’s first Scottish words – oxters, doup and teuchter – mean “armpits”, “bottom” and a “rural Scot” respectively.

He is teetotal – his body has an intolerance of alcohol, having no enzymes in his blood to metabolise it.

Pictures: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY

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Going The Extra Mile

Making small changes to support children with ADHD at a Scottish primary school has transformed life for pupils, teachers and families

by MORAG LINDSAY

I DON'T know what school you went to – but I bet I could list some of its rules. Be on time. Sit still. Listen to the teacher. Don't fidget. Wait for the bell.

And I bet you there were children who really struggled with those rules. The ones who “played up” and “kicked off”. Who disrupted lessons for everyone and would not take a telling. The ones whose failure to conform saw them mocked, belted, detained and even expelled.

But what if they weren't just being troublemakers?

What if they were among the estimated 5% of the population who are now thought to have ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)?

And what if the work being pioneered at Strathmore Primary in Forfar had been the norm when you went to school? Because, again, I'll bet you it would have been a nicer, more productive experience for everyone.

Strathmore Primary is Scotland's first ADHD-friendly school, and head teacher Jennifer Garnes and her team are justly proud of the label. The award is presented by the ADHD Foundation, in recognition of schools going the extra mile to support children with the condition.

People with ADHD find it difficult to concentrate, sit still, follow directions and to control impulsive behaviour. To exist in a traditional school setting, basically.

At Strathmore, there are baskets of fidget toys in every classroom. Regular movement breaks allow children to get up and stretch when attention levels start to drop.

Every class has a “cosy corner” – a den with books, cushions and soft toys, where pupils can take themselves for five minutes if they're starting to feel overwhelmed.

There's no school bell. But there are visual timetables, a sensory room and a “nurture corner” where children who need extra help with social skills can learn to take turns, listen to others and talk about their feelings with a little help from Colin, the talking time hedgehog.

A soft start from 9am to 9.20am, with a welcome and toast, allows youngsters to ease their way into the day.

If a child finds assembly overwhelming, they're not forced to sit through it. If they keep ending up in playground scuffles, there are other activities they can do at break times that won't land them in trouble.

These measures aren't just for children with an ADHD



Jennifer Garnes, councillor
Lynne Devine and teacher
Sarah Webster with pupils



“We just want to get it right for the bairns”

diagnosis. They're there for everyone. And the award also acknowledges the efforts Strathmore Primary has made to de-stigmatise the condition and celebrate neurodiversity.

“We don't force square pegs into round holes at Strathmore,” says Jennifer. “We used to ask if a child was ready for school. What we should have been asking was, ‘Is school ready for the child?’”

We speak on the phone at first, and Jennifer tells me visitors always comment on the happy atmosphere at Strathmore.

They're getting more observers, now news of their success is spreading. The day before my visit, a delegation from Dumfries and Galloway made the 300-mile round trip to Forfar to view the changes and think about how to adapt them for their own school.

The teaching team welcomes everyone – the impact on Strathmore has been so dramatic they'd shout it from the rooftops if they thought the world was listening. And so, on a rainy Thursday, I join the throng.

Arriving just before break time, pupils pile into the corridors, which thrum with a calm, contented hubbub.

Posters on the wall declare Strathmore's values of acceptance and inclusion, and umbrellas in all the colours of the rainbow hang from the hall ceiling. “They represent neurodiversity,” Jennifer says. “We're all here under the same umbrella, but none of us are the same.”

It wasn't always like this, though. A couple of years ago all the charts by which you measure the success of a primary school were pointing in the wrong direction.

Attendance wasn't great. Rates of exclusion were higher than they should have been. The school, whose catchment area includes pockets of deep deprivation, didn't have a great reputation. And one problem

bothered Jennifer more than anything else.

“We weren't getting it right for the children,” she says.

It was time to think differently. They started with outdoor learning, to try to reach pupils who weren't doing well in the classroom.

It turned out they flourished in the fresh air. And it was fun. So now every class gets to enjoy lessons in the outdoor classroom, complete with fire pit, garden and planters, as well as visits to places like

Lunan Bay and Monikie Country Park.

One by one, additional measures were introduced following consultation with the ADHD Foundation, partner agencies like social work, and parents and pupils.

Some of the changes were small, like the inexpensive fidget toys and wobble cushions for little fidgeters.

Cardboard dividers help to screen off the commotion of open-plan classrooms, while resistance bands – plastic straps that stretch between the two front legs of a chair – give restless legs something to kick against. »



Jennifer Garnes



Umbrellas in the hall



Pupils using up some energy



Left: The sensory room

Below: A cosy corner



“So many children go under the radar”

Custom-made mats in the corridor encourage youngsters to hop, skip and jump, burning up energy as they learn about the solar system, or the natural world.

The sensory room is filled with soft cushions and lights, which provide a calming environment.

Other actions involved more of a cultural shift. And it's no exaggeration to say it's changed the school's ethos.

Children learn about neurodiversity and conditions such as ADHD, autism and dyslexia. They're taught that having ADHD doesn't mean you think wrongly, just differently. And that with the right direction, traits like creativity and endless energy can become a superpower.

At the heart of it all is the conviction that Strathmore is doing this for everyone, ADHD diagnosis or not.

“So many children go under the radar and are not diagnosed until much later in life,” says Jennifer. “That’s especially true for girls, who are much better at masking, hiding emotions and acting as if everything’s fine.”

The other benefit has been breaking down the stigma around those children who do need additional support.

“When the fidget toys first arrived, everyone wanted to play with them,” explains deputy head Ruth McFarlane.

“Then the novelty wore off – now it’s just the children that really need them who play with them.”

The same goes for the cosy corners. There’s one in every classroom. It’s just a part of Strathmore life that pupils can simply take themselves off for a breather.

No hands up, waiting for permission. Nobody rolling their eyes because someone is making a fuss again.

Just a group of children getting on with their lessons and getting a grounding in the sort of kindness and acceptance that might just make the world a better place.

It’s not all sweetness and light, but Jennifer says, “There’s a clean slate every day here.”

And everyone seems to be benefiting from this approach. Attendance is up. Exclusions are down. Results are improving. The children who need that additional support are getting it. Other children go home calmer because they’ve had peace to get on with their work.

Parents are seeing their children achieve and succeed. They’re asking for advice on techniques to use at home.

And the teachers? They wouldn’t dream of going back to the way they did things before.

It’s been a massive change, with lots of training and soul-searching. It’s hard for a teacher to confront their old practices and to realise that, however well-intentioned, there were probably children they’d let down in the past.

But it’s worked for Strathmore because everyone has got behind it. Everyone can see how well it’s working.

Announcing the ADHD-friendly award, ADHD Foundation training director Colin Foley said staff had gone “above and beyond to make their lessons and their school environment enjoyable, supportive and safe spaces for students with ADHD”.

It’s an impressive accolade but it all boils down to something much simpler. Jennifer says, “We’re just treating them the way we’d like our own children to be treated. We just want to get it right for the bairns.”



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Distillers Raising The Bar

Tour an award-winning brewery or create your own unique gin

SIGHTSEEING in Stirling and its surrounding areas can be thirsty work – and Allanwater Brewhouse and Stirling Distillery have the answer.

The award-winning Allanwater Brewhouse in Bridge of Allan is a microbrewery with a bar, shop and two beer gardens.

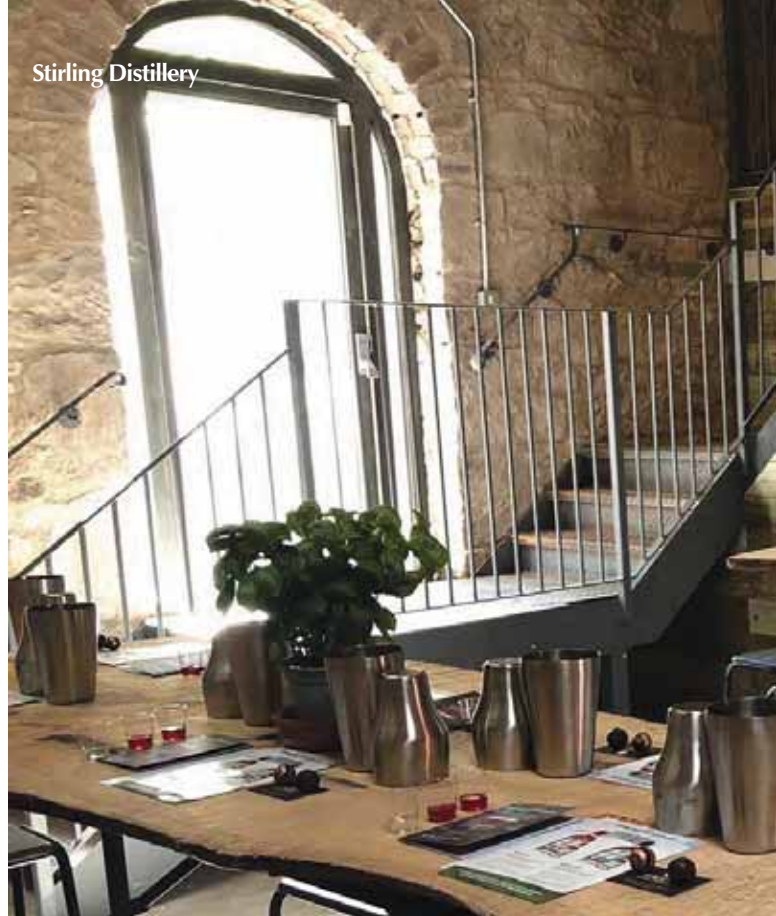
Founded by owner Douglas Ross in 1996, it regularly hosts live music nights, quizzes and beer festivals.

With an assortment of board games and books on offer, it can also be the perfect spot to while away a lazy Sunday afternoon.

The microbrewery offers three different levels of tour – Bronze, Silver and Gold. All provide an insight into the brewing process and a taste of the raw ingredients and finished products, with a pint to finish.



Allanwater Brewhouse



Stirling Distillery

The Silver tour throws in a bowl of homemade soup and a platter of sandwiches, and the Gold culminates with their renowned homemade steak and ale pie with vegetables. Vegetarian options can be requested at the time of booking, so no one is left out.

There are also classes – Brewer for a Day and Half Day Brewer. They are similar to the tours, but more hands-on and in-depth.

Both classes boast a meal of soup followed by steak and ale pie, and you will leave with more beer or cider than you can shake a glass at.

However, if you prefer to wind down with a crisp G&T or a warming dram, Stirling Distillery is for you.

Husband and wife Cameron and June McCann started producing their now-renowned Stirling Gin in 2015 and opened the distillery in 2019.

It occupies a historic building in the shadow of the castle called the Old Smiddy.

Stirling Gin is infused with wild Stirlingshire nettles. It sits alongside the Folklore Collection, a range of gin liqueurs inspired by the stories of the area.

Two years ago, the McCanns bottled their first whiskies under their Sons of Scotland series – two single-cask expressions named after Stirlingshire distilleries active in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The couple later added two further expressions to the label.

And last year, they unveiled plans for a limited edition single malt set that will comprise six bottles matured in various casks. The King James collection will be released on a bi-annual basis from 2027.



Stirlingshire

FOCUS ON
FOCUS ON

Allanwater Brewhouse

When...

Mon-Thu 12pm-11pm, Fri & Sat
12pm-12am, Sun 12pm-10pm.

How Much...

Tours from £18 per person.

Where...

Queen's Lane, Bridge of Allan, FK9 4NY.

Contact

☎ 01786 834555

✉ info@allanwaterbrewhouse.co.uk

💻 allanwaterbrewhouse.co.uk

*“Perfect spot for a lazy
Sunday afternoon”*

The distillery also runs an award-winning gin school, where you will be seated at a mini still while a staff member takes you through the history of the spirit.

After an introduction to the craft, you can then choose your botanicals and get to work on blending.

Once finished, you will bottle and label your creation with your personalised Old Smiddy Gin School label to take home – but not before setting some aside to test in a refreshing G&T.

The distillery also offers daily gin and whisky tastings as well as tours – so fans of a tipple are definitely spoiled for choice! >>

Stirling Distillery

When...

Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12-5pm.

How Much...

Tours from £10 per person.

Where...

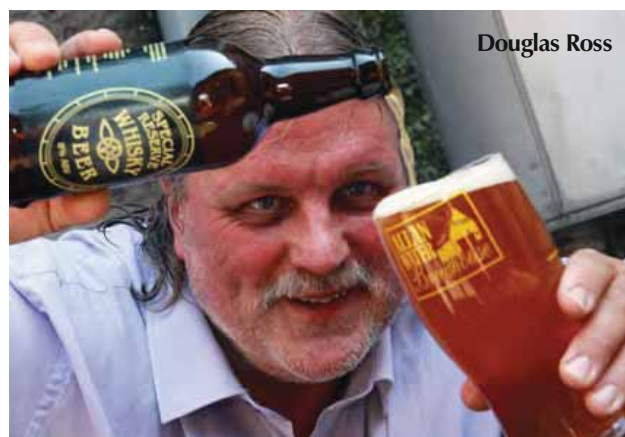
9 Lower Castlehill, Stirling, FK8 1EN.

Contact

☎ 01786 596496

✉ hello@stirlingdistillery.co.uk

💻 stirlingdistillery.com



Douglas Ross



Stirling Gin

As Seen On Screen

Follow in the footsteps of dukes, Jacobites, Pythons and Starks as you explore the well-preserved medieval stronghold of Doune Castle

STANDING before Doune Castle, with its towering gatehouse looming above you, is breathtaking.

If it seems familiar, it could be because it has served as a number of strongholds over decades of films and television shows.

The site is naturally defended on three sides by steeply sloping ground, as well as by the River Teith to the west and Ardoch Burn to the east.

The castle dates to the 14th century where it was the seat of Robert Stewart, the first Duke of Albany and governor of Scotland.

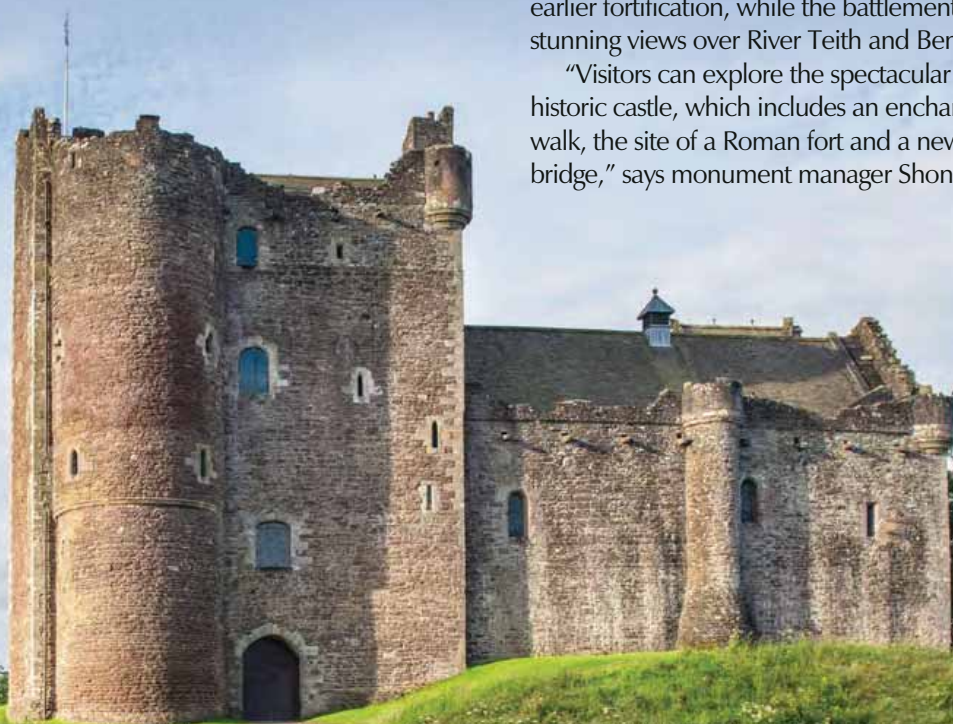
Abbot Bower, a contemporary of the duke, described him as a “big spender”.

The cathedral-like great hall, one of the best preserved in Scotland, is where Stewart and his wife Margaret Graham, former countess of Menteith, would have held lavish feasts.

Equally impressive is the splendid duke’s hall, which was restored in 1883 as part of a renovation programme ordered by the Earl of Moray. It features a musicians’ gallery, double fireplace and carved oak screen.

The bowels of the castle might hold evidence of an earlier fortification, while the battlements provide stunning views over River Teith and Ben Lomond.

“Visitors can explore the spectacular grounds of this historic castle, which includes an enchanting woodland walk, the site of a Roman fort and a new pedestrian bridge,” says monument manager Shona Menzies.



“It has provided an awe-inspiring backdrop for all kinds of filming”

Stirlingshire



The castle is well preserved

When...

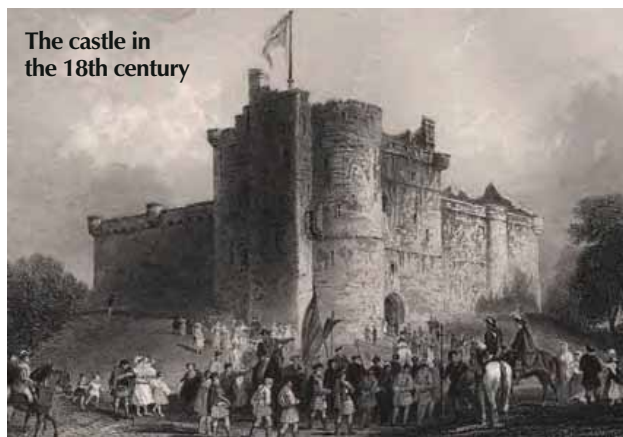
Daily, 10am-4pm

How Much...

Adult £9.50, child £5.50

Where...

Castle Hill,
Doune,
FK16 6EA



The castle in the 18th century



On the banks of the River Teith

"Doune Castle, which was built in the 14th century, has had a long and varied history – it was a royal household, then a dower house to the queens of Scotland, used as a hunting lodge and then, later in its life, acted as a state prison housing prisoners during the 1745 Jacobite uprising.

"As well as that, Doune Castle has provided an awe-inspiring backdrop for all kinds of filming – including *Outlander*, *Game Of Thrones*, *Outlaw King* and, of course, *Monty Python And The Holy Grail*."

Outlander turned the site into Castle Leoch, the Highland stronghold of Colum MacKenzie and his clan.

It was chilly Winterfell, home of House Stark, in the *Game Of Thrones* pilot and stood in for Douglas Castle in the recent Robert the Bruce epic *Outlaw King*, with Hollywood star Chris Pine in the lead role.

Monty Python And The Holy Grail used it to play two castles – Anthrax and Swamp.

And *Python's* Terry Jones narrates a good audio guide,

taking visitors round the rooms and telling the castle's story, as well as dropping in interesting filming facts here and there.

"While there has been increased interest in the castle thanks to its association with popular films and TV series – especially *Outlander* – many people also visit Doune Castle because of the incredible history of the site," says Shona.

If you are an *Outlander* fan, though, don't miss the audio tour – as some parts are also voiced by Sam Heughan, who plays Jamie in the popular series. »

Don't Miss...

A visit isn't complete without a trip into the nearby village of Doune.

CONTACT

01786 841742

www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/doune-castle/

Mysterious Mission

Put your family's powers of deduction to the test with a Treasure Trail as you search for clues in the historic city of Stirling's oldest streets

BUDDING detectives are in with a chance of winning £100 by solving a mystery in the heart of Stirling.

Clues dotted around a 3.2-kilometre (two-mile) route will put your family's powers of deduction to the test in a fiendishly fun whodunnit.

Treasure Trails is an award-winning enterprise that offers more than 1000 such walks across the UK.

Simply buy your trail booklet online, then either print at home or select for one to be sent to you – remember, deerstalker hat and magnifying glass are not included!

It is a fantastic way to get children off their consoles and tablets and out into the fresh air where they can burn off some energy exploring and solving puzzles.

In fact, the trails are suitable for people of all ages – from four to 104.

Each self-guided walk has the theme of either spy mission, treasure hunt or detective mystery, and every theme also features an optional, free-of-charge club your child can join.

Perfect for four to eight-year-olds, the clubs include activities to keep kids entertained while travelling to and from the walk.

The Detective Mystery Trail in Stirling begins outside the historic city's Old Town Jail.

While you're there, why not take in one of the immersive live performance tours that run there every 30 minutes?

You can also explore the cells, visit the *Scene Of The Crime* exhibition, and enjoy the panoramic views from the observation tower.

You will then proceed up cobbled St John Street

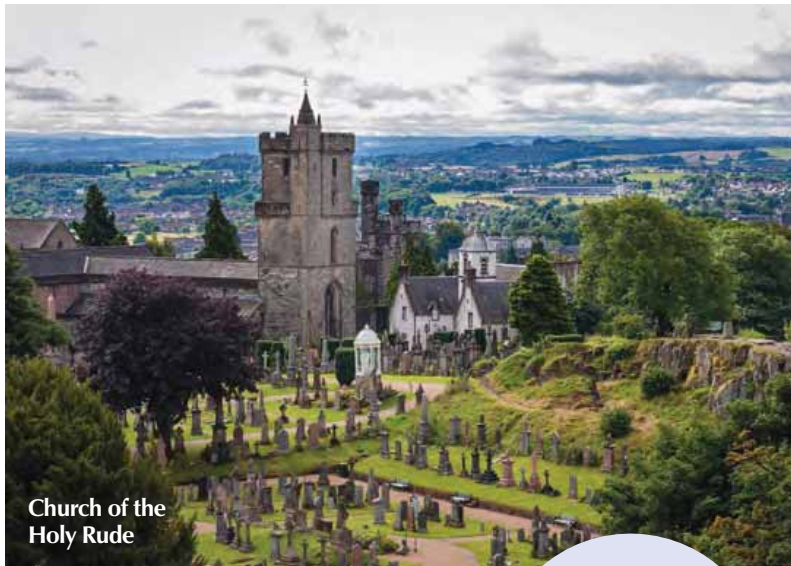
“It begins outside the city's Old Town Jail”



Old Town Jail

Stirlingshire

FOCUS ON
FOCUS ON



Church of the Holy Rude

When...

All year round.

How Much...

£9.99 per trail.

Old Town Jail – Adult from £9,
Concession/Child from £6.

Where...

The trail begins at St John Street,
Stirling, FK8 1EB.

Don't Miss...

Make a night of it
and book a thrilling
ghost walk at
Old Town Jail.

towards the magnificent Church of the Holy Rude. After the castle, it is the oldest building in the city.

It was here that the infant James VI was crowned king of Scotland after the forced abdication of his mother Mary, Queen of Scots.

The trail then takes you along the historic Back Walk to the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum.

This free attraction features more than 40,000 objects, artworks and photographs to fire imaginations both young and old.

The Smith Café – open 10am to 3.30pm, Wednesday to Sunday – is also the ideal place for ace investigators to recharge and review their progress in cracking the case.

The trail takes in King Street, Friars Street, St Mary's Wynd and Bow Street, before concluding where it began outside the Old Town Jail.

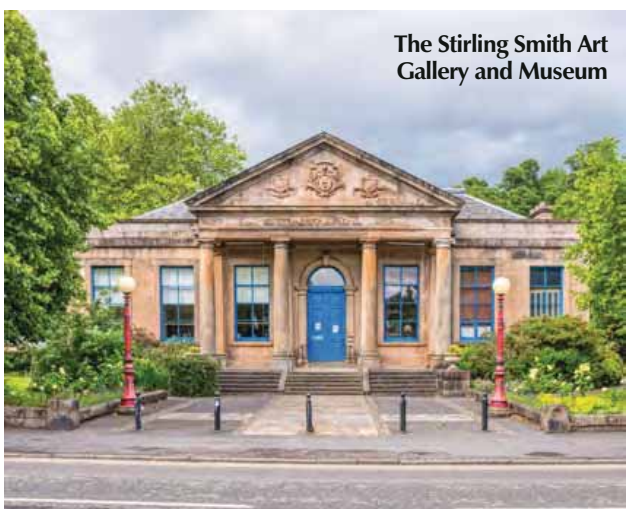
If at any point, the sleuths in your party are scratching their heads in puzzlement, there is a mobile phone text service providing answers to clues.

Minus any additional visits to attractions – not included in the trail cost – the walk should take just over two hours.

All correct answers are entered into a monthly £100 prize draw, so sleuths should spare no effort! >>



Treasure Trail

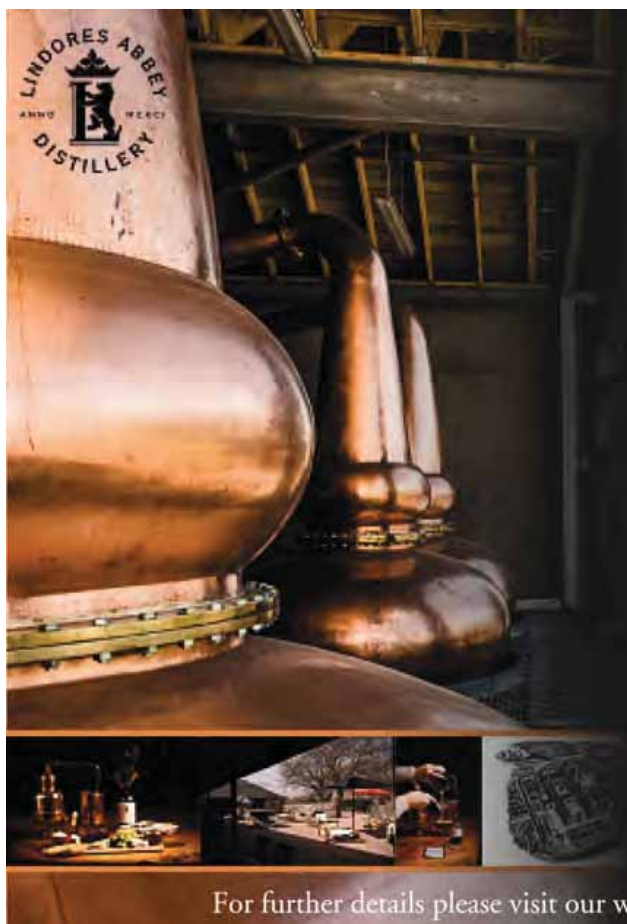


The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum

CONTACT

01872 263692
enquiries@treasuretrails.co.uk
www.treasuretrails.co.uk &
www.oldtownjail.co.uk

Pictures: ALAMY



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Stirlingshire

FOCUS ON

A Fitting Legacy

Popular museum explores the area's rich cultural history and is home to the world's oldest football

PASS between the statuesque pillars and through the double doors of The Stirling Smith Art Gallery & Museum to discover the area's rich cultural history.

It was founded at the bequest of Thomas Stuart Smith and is a fitting legacy to the 19th-century Scottish painter and philanthropist.

"In addition to its permanent collection, The Smith also hosts exhibitions by local artists throughout the year," says exhibitions and events officer Dr Heather Carroll.

"Visitors can enjoy a meal in the museum's cosy café and explore the grounds, which are also home to a biodiversity garden."

The museum runs a diverse events programme, too – worth checking when planning a visit.

"The Smith is home to the world's oldest football," says Heather. "It was kicked into the rafters of Stirling Castle in the 1540s, where it remained for 400 years.

Don't Miss...

Some of the ceramic pieces are available to buy from the shop.

"*The Pipe Of Freedom* is perhaps the most profound work by the museum's founder. It portrays a black man smoking a pipe in front of a copy of the *Emancipation Proclamation* pasted on to a brick wall.

"The artwork was a political statement, celebrating the abolition of slavery," says Heather.

"And visitors can't miss the newest addition to the collection – *Easy Tiger* is a life-sized sculpture of a tiger covered in red and silver Tunnock's teacake wrappers by brothers David and Robert Mach.

"And *Seize The Clay*, a ceramics exhibition by Kathleen Morison, Elaine Hill and Rebecca Pankhurst, runs until January 22.

"Then *Painting The Polar Landscape*, by artist Lesley Burr, opens on January 25," Heather says.

"Burr's landscape paintings chronicle the fragile beauty of the Arctic as it rapidly transforms due to the impact of climate change." »

When...

Wednesday to Sunday,
10am-5pm.

How Much...

Free entry.

Where...

Dumbarton Road,
Stirling,
FK8 2RQ.

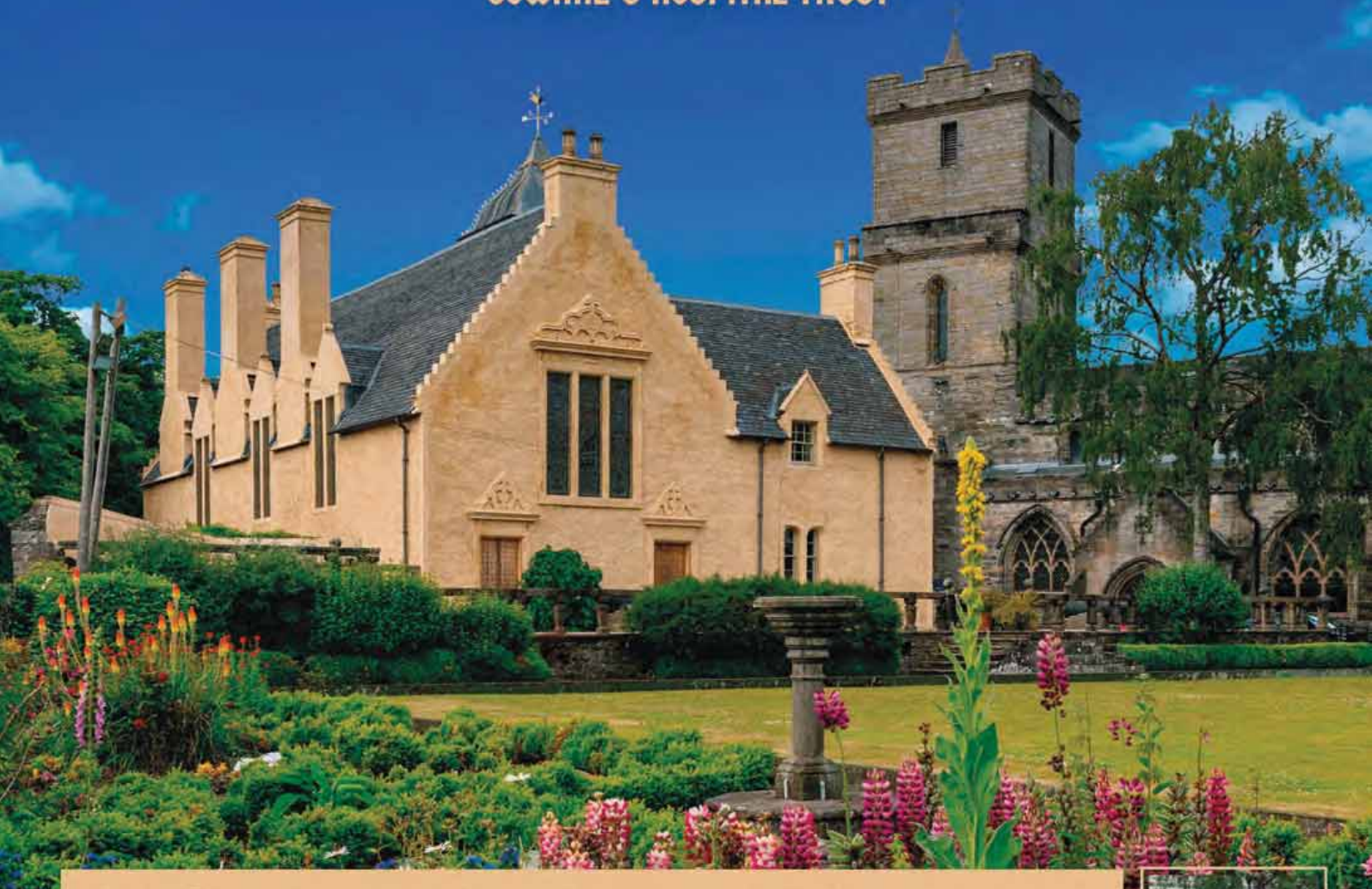
CONTACT

01786 471917
www.smithartgalleryand
museum.co.uk

Pictures: ALAMY



Easy Tiger, by the Mach brothers



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Stirlingshire

Rural Retail Therapy

A treasure trove awaits at one of Scotland's largest vintage and antique emporiums



Antiques on offer

When...

Daily, 10am-5pm.

Where...

Carse of Cambus,
Doune,
Stirlingshire,
FK16 6HG.

CONTACT

01786 841203
info@scottish-antiques.com
www.scottish-antiques.com

THE Scottish Antique & Arts Centre offers a unique shopping experience off the A84 near Doune.

Set among verdant fields not far from the Trossachs, it is the perfect spot for some rural retail therapy.

"We have three large shopping halls with contemporary goods, antiques, furniture, jewellery, glassware – everything really," says manager Kathryn McKeown.

"There's a licensed restaurant on site as well, and we have things like a little food department, cards and gift wrapping – that kind of idea."

Bob and Elaine Templeman first opened an antiques centre in Abernethy, Perthshire, in 1997.

It proved such a success that they opened a second centre in Doune two years later.

Across the two sites, the Scottish Antique & Arts Centre now hosts more than 250 dealers – making it one of the country's largest vintage and antique emporiums.

"People always think it's a small place," says Kathryn.

"Then they come in and it just goes on and on and on – they are impressed by the size of it and the quantity of stock that we have inside."

The award-winning centre does indeed boast a truly

dizzying collection – but friendly, approachable staff are always on hand to offer advice.

Asked what her personal highlights are, Kathryn says, "The antiques – the jewellery's always really good value, lots of diamonds!"

If visitors have worked up an appetite browsing the wares then the fully-licensed Café Circa awaits, serving up breakfast, brunch, lunch and afternoon tea.

The focus is on the finest traditional ingredients in a fresh, imaginative style – so why not feast your eyes on the items on offer, and then treat yourself to a feast in the cafe. »

Don't Miss...

Tempting confectionery and delicious local produce to purchase and take home.



The centre is near Doune

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PLACES TO EAT...



The Orangery

The Orangery, 01786 473920. An elegant location and an innovative fine dining menu.

Buttercup Cafe, 01786 842511. Lunches, homemade cakes, bakes and delicious coffee, just a short walk from Doune Castle.

Friend Of Mine, 01786 831386. Relaxed Aussie-style food and drinks, catering for vegetarians, vegans and gluten-free diets.

The Allan Park, 01786 475336. Delicious, hearty meals at a welcoming pub restaurant.

...PLACES TO STAY...

Hotel Colessio, 01786 448880. This Victorian landmark has been transformed into a contemporary boutique hotel, just a stone's throw from Stirling Castle.

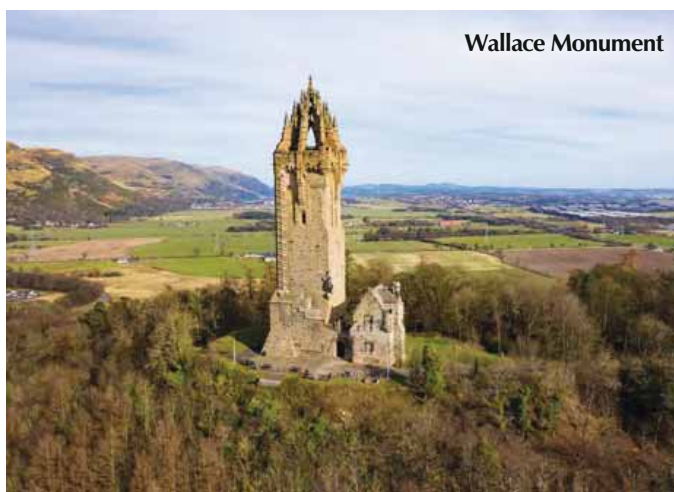
Cromlix, 01786 822125. Scottish tennis superstar Sir Andy Murray's extensively refurbished luxury five-star destination, near Dunblane.

Friars Wynd, 01786 473390. Quirky, newly-renovated boutique hotel situated on one of Stirling's oldest streets – Friars Street – with a wine bar and bistro.

Doubletree by Hilton Dunblane Hydro, 0870 590 9090. Guests can enjoy dinner in The Kailyard by Nick Nairn during a luxury stay in this historic spa hotel.



Hotel Colessio



Wallace Monument

...THINGS TO DO AND SEE

National Wallace Monument, 01786 472140. Climb the 246 stairs of this famous landmark above the fields where William Wallace led his troops to victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

Briarlands Farm, 01786 841309. Fun for families, including indoor and outdoor play equipment, petting zoo, jumping pillows and go-karts – remember to book the tractor tour.

Macrobert Arts Centre, 01786 466666. Take in the latest blockbuster film or enjoy a live show at this cultural hub.

Argaty Red Kites, 01786 841373. Watch these spectacular raptors on the farm's legendary afternoon feeding tour.

Stirling Castle, 01786 450000. Dominating Stirling's skyline, the castle is a shining example of Renaissance architecture. Don't miss the peaceful Queen Anne Gardens on the sunny southern side of the castle. The stronghold is also home to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum. 



Jim Crumley, Scotland's leading wildlife author,

On Nature's Terms

The only conservation solution we must pursue is to let wildlife manage wildlife, while repairing native habitats that humans have destroyed

MOVEMENT low down on the pinewood floor, movement in a way that suggested something had changed.

One of the virtues of sitting still in front of a restricted view is that you quickly become intimate enough with its broad brushstrokes, and many of its points of focus and light, to notice when something is not exactly as it was the last time you looked.

Don't move. Let nature do the moving. Stillness is a kind of concealment that assists nature's acceptance. Become landscape.

A wise woman of nature once wrote this, "If you want to write with absolute truth and with the ease of a natural function, write from your eyes and ears, and your touch, in the very now where you find yourself alive wherever it might be... conceal yourself in the fields.

"Watch and be in what you see or in what you feel in your brain. There is no substitute even in divine imagination for the touch of the moment, the touch of the daylight on the dream."

Her name was Margiad Evans, the book was called *Autobiography* and it was published in 1943. "The touch of the daylight on the dream" has become the daily quest of my writing life.

And now, following her advice to the letter, eyes and ears had just seen movement low down on the floor of a Scottish pinewood.

Intensify the stillness, intensify the looking and the

listening. Another movement, again dark and low down. What had not been there before was what looked like two mushrooms stuck to a fragment of dark wood, except that it was not the mushroom season and there was an unlikely glossy sheen on the dark wood.

It moved again and rose a few inches, the mushrooms materialised into ears and the wood into the deep brown face and black-eyed stare of a pine marten at 20 paces. Behold the touch of the daylight on the dream.

The movement had the stealth of wildcat, but then the sun caught peach-coloured throat and cream shoulders, and the movement also acquired the bravado and the downright beauty of pine marten.

There was the pointed stare, the struck pose that registered awareness – then, reassured by the stillness, the marten ambled away about its business.

It's quite something to be one half of one of the oldest encounters in the story of the Highlands' Great Wood, and you should resist the temptation to stitch "of Caledon" on the end of the phrase, for there is no such >>

"But why is the life of a capercaillie more important than the life of a pine marten"

writes exclusively for you every month...

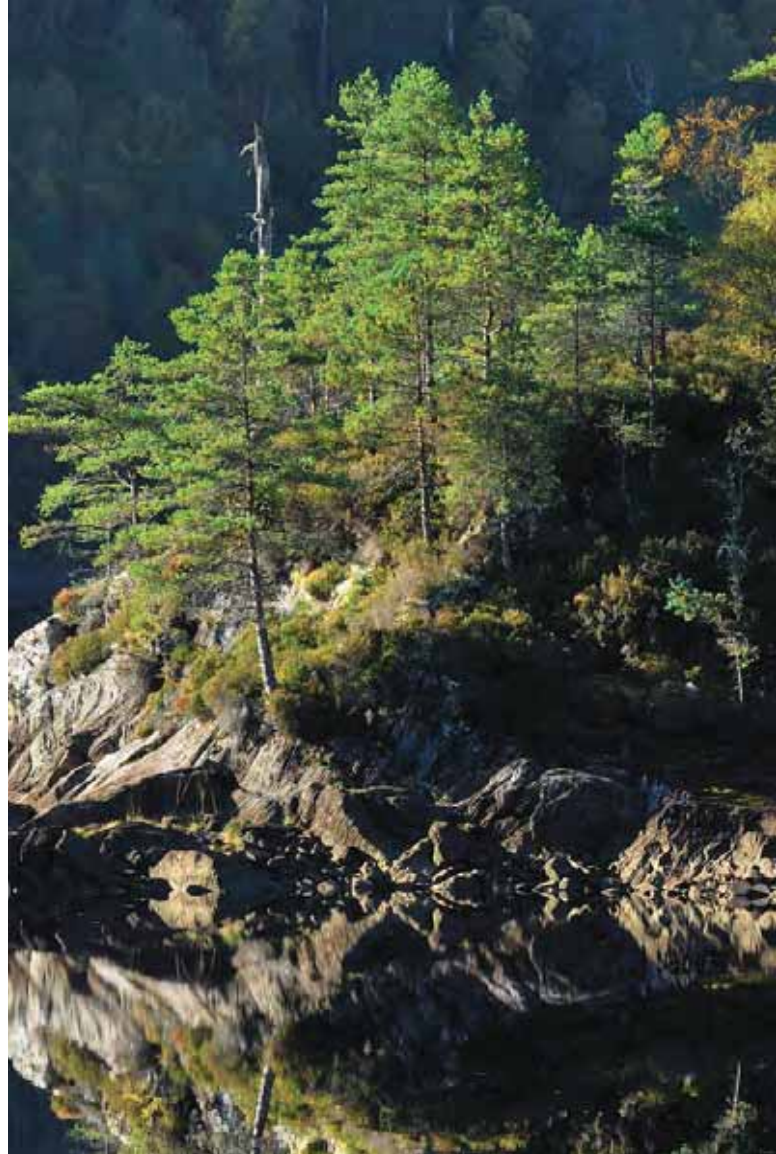
Pine marten



Right: A male capercaillie

Main: Glen Affric pinewoods

Below: Pine martens



thing and I doubt if there ever was – and its present wretched condition of scattered fragments was never less great at any time in the last 10,000 years, since the Great Ice held sway.

But man and pine marten have been meeting each other in such terrain for millennia, except that there was an era in which the Victorians were the principal villains when the pine marten was hunted, trapped, shot and poisoned to the verge of extinction.

And it is not so long ago – well within my own lifetime – that what was left of the pine marten population was holed up in a desperate battle with extinction on the Sutherland coast.

DID YOU KNOW?

Male capercaillies can weigh up to 5kg (11lb). During the breeding season, they put on a flamboyant display known as a “lek”, emitting gurgles, wheezes and cork popping sounds.

Eventually, it was given a surreptitious and wholly unauthorised helping hand. It responded eagerly and in time it prospered.

And once again, man and marten can meet deep in the woods, from Sutherland to the Borders.

But... With nature conservation and Scotland, there is almost always a “but”.

So bear all of the above in mind while I talk to you about capercaillies, the Cairngorms National Park, and a new and openly discussed strategy to assist the cause of critically endangered capercaillies – removing pine martens.

So when I say that there is almost always a “but”, that is because established practice within professional nature conservation and privately-run estates involves a species of “wildlife management” – which is another way of saying predator control, which is another way of saying paying men with guns to kill creatures that get in the way.

And “controlling” pine martens simply because they will sometimes take the eggs of ground-nesting capercaillies marks the point at which rewilding has finally taken leave of its senses.

In pursuit of its capercaillie policy, the Cairngorms National Park is, to quote its own website, “funding



“Too many beavers, cry the farmers”

gamekeepers to reduce predator pressure over 8500 hectares of core habitat”.

So, in order to preserve wildlife, the Cairngorms National Park is paying men with guns to kill wildlife.

Top of the hit list are the usual suspects, foxes and crows – and it seems to occur to no one in “land management” in Scotland that killing foxes and crows doesn’t work. It never has and it never will do.

What that policy does is create a vacuum, and what moves in to fill the vacuum is more foxes and more crows.

One of the funded gamekeepers is also quoted on the national park website, pointing out that in addition to foxes and crows, pine martens and badgers also predate on capercaillie eggs, but that “they can only be controlled under licence and only in very specific circumstances”.

There is no mention of how many pine martens and how many badgers.

Yes, the plight of capercaillies is a very specific circumstance. But why is the life of a capercaillie more

important than the life of a pine marten? When did we start ranking wildlife species that way?

The answer you will get is that the capercaillie is struggling and the pine marten is not. The missing words in that answer are “any more” – the pine marten is not struggling any more.

David Carroll, a naturalist, writer and artist who lives in New Hampshire, and so accomplished in all three disciplines that he was recognised with the McArthur Foundation’s American Genius Award, has written an essential truth in his book, *Swampwalker’s Journal*.

He says, “The term ‘wildlife management’, often used in the environmental polemics of the day in reference to human manipulations, is an oxymoron. We should have learned long ago to simply leave the proper natural space, to respectfully withdraw and let wildlife manage wildlife.”

Every time I quote that, it is because some new human manipulation of nature has tipped one more unnatural ingredient into the cauldron where nature conservation thinking coagulates in a toxic broth of our own making. »

“A desperate battle with extinction”

Capercaillies have been struggling in Scotland for decades. The species has been extinct once already and reintroduced, since when it has never prospered, and for much of that time pine martens were more or less absent.

Pine martens were not the reason for the capercaillie's struggles then and they are not now. Neither are foxes, badgers or crows. Habitat is the reason.

So is relentlessly increasing human disturbance and humans' dogs, relentlessly egged on by an uncaring tourist industry.

The habitat is too limited and too fragmented – and we did that.

Meanwhile, many professional nature conservation organisations are as culpable as the shooting estates that still plague the landscape of Scotland. Licences for killing protected wildlife species or moving them out of the areas they have chosen to live in are all too readily available.

Reintroduced species with, in theory, the strongest

legal protection are being illegally killed and legally controlled by one means or another.

Too many beavers, cry the farmers. Too many sea eagles, cry the crofters. It is as ritualistic as it is knee-jerk as it is wrong-headed.

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DON'T miss the chance to enter your best Scottish image in our annual Photographer of the Year competition – remember, you have until February 8 to send your entry in.

You can choose any subject in the country and any style of photography – whether it's places, wildlife, people or events. You can only enter one image this year, though – so choose wisely!

We ask that you send the largest and highest quality version of your image, if digitally up to 3MB, with a minimum of 300dpi. Low quality or small images will not be considered.

After the closing date, all entries will be reviewed by our judging panel. They'll whittle the entries down to a final 12, and then it's over to you, our readers, to vote for the ultimate Photographer of the Year.

The chosen 12 finalist images will be published in our April issue and online for your votes, with the winner being announced in our June magazine. The winner will receive a cheque for £200, an official trophy and a print of their winning image.

To inspire you, this month we've chosen an incredible close-up shot of an inquisitive red squirrel surveying a snowy forest.

Good luck!

ENTRY DETAILS

Digital entries must be in JPEG format. Enter via our website on the address above using the code, or via email to photography@scotsmagazine.com. You can also send your entry via post to Photographer of the Year Entries, The Scots Magazine, DC Thomson & Co Ltd, 2 Albert Square, Dundee, DD1 1DD. The closing date is 5pm on Wednesday, February 8, 2023. All entries must be in the sole ownership of the entrant and not infringe on the copyright of any other party. Voting is limited to one vote per image per day, and this will be regulated via an automated verification process once voting has closed.

Visit our website for full competition Ts&Cs, <https://www.scotsmagazine.com/articles/photographer-of-the-year-competition-terms>, or send a large, stamped self-addressed envelope to The Scots Magazine Photography Competition, Copy Of Your Competition Terms, DC Thomson & Co Ltd, 2 Albert Square, Dundee, DD1 1DD.

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— FROM THE — VAULT

Strange tales from the archives.
This month – How furious fans of
cancelled cartoon rose
up in protest

by CHRIS FERGUSON

THROUGHOUT the ages, principled protest has been a hallmark of youth – a rite of passage for many.

Today it is Greta Thunberg and her army of teen climate activists, or Extinction Rebellion protesters, who make headlines.

In the 1960s it was the Vietnam War objectors and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament believers who set out their political agendas.

In later decades young people swelled the ranks of those demanding an end to apartheid in South Africa.

They were at the barricades as then-PM Margaret Thatcher introduced the poll tax and back out again to try to stop the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Another generation, too, had the courage of its convictions. In 1971, youngsters rose in anger at a threat to remove cowardly canine Scooby-Doo from their television screens.

This was in February after the cartoon had been running for two years. Although the decision not to



Jimmy Brown fought
to save the cartoon

commission another series had been taken in the US, the BBC was the target of fans' fury because it had to pass on the bad news to young viewers.

Within days of the announcement, an army of parka-wearing children sporting knitted jumpers and questionable hairstyles was formed.

Across Scotland children grouped together with placards, just like so many other worthy protesters before them. In Glasgow, the massed kids marched on the BBC Scotland headquarters and, in Dundee, they gathered in outrage in City Square.

Petitions were raised and demonstrations took place across the country and, by April, the BBC announced a further series had been commissioned in the US.

Legend has it these Scots Scooby fans had persuaded the American television executives to reconsider.

Hanna-Barbera, the animation company behind *Scooby-Doo*, never forgot the Scottish reaction.

A spokesman for the company said, "We'd never had a response like that before, it was very exciting." 

*“An army of
parka-wearing
children was
formed”*

Scooby-
Doo and
the gang



Pictures: ALAMY

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The Great Eight

Scottish customs, fascinating facts and romantic places linked to the celebration of love on February 14

by CRAIG HORNE

VALENTINE'S DAY, like many annual occasions celebrated in Scotland – and beyond – is a curious mix of paganism and Christianity.

In name, it recalls one of two possible Italian saints martyred around the 3rd century CE. In form, it seems to owe more to the mid-February Roman festival of Lupercalia, a celebration of courtship and fertility.

In Scotland, one church owns a piece of the saint, his name appears in street signs and the date is associated with some notable events, both real and fictional.

Here, we take a tour around some of the Scottish places connected to St Valentine, as well as looking at poems and customs to get you in the mood for romance!



River Don

Address Fit For A Saint

Smitten couples in the north-east might set up home in Valentine Road or Drive, Bridge of Don. With its handsome houses and well-maintained gardens, the area is fit for a saint. Lovers could enjoy strolling hand-in-hand among the trees lining the River Don and walk across the historic and picturesque Brig o' Balgownie. They would find themselves just four miles from the shops, bars, restaurants and theatres of Aberdeen's bustling city centre – although, if a desire for warmer, more exotic climes overcame them, they'd be but five miles from a potential romantic getaway at Aberdeen International Airport. »



Statue of makar
William Dunbar

Widow's Words

The earliest mention of St Valentine in the *Dictionary Of The Scots Language* is more than 500 years old. It appears in *The Tretis Of The Twa Mariit Wemen And The Wedo – The Treatise Of The Two Married Women And The Widow* – by the Scottish makar William Dunbar. “You speak of birds on the bough: they may well sing of their bliss, who are vacant each year on St Valentine’s Day.” This relates to a belief, at least as old as Chaucer, that birds would pair up on February 14. The poem is a treasure trove of old Scots words.

Poet In The Privy

Mary, Queen of Scots, was not amused to discover a lovesick Pierre de Bocosel de Chastelard under her bed at Rossend Castle, Burntisland, on Valentine’s Day 1562. The French poet had been pardoned for an identical stunt at Holyroodhouse. This time, the monarch demanded her half-brother, the Earl of Moray, kill Chastelard on the spot. As it happened, her men instead took him to St Andrews to face trial. Chastelard’s defence was that he had been in the Queen’s privy, not under her bed. This distinction cut no ice with the court and he was beheaded at the Market Cross.



Chastelard plays for
Mary, Queen of Scots



Relic's Resting Place

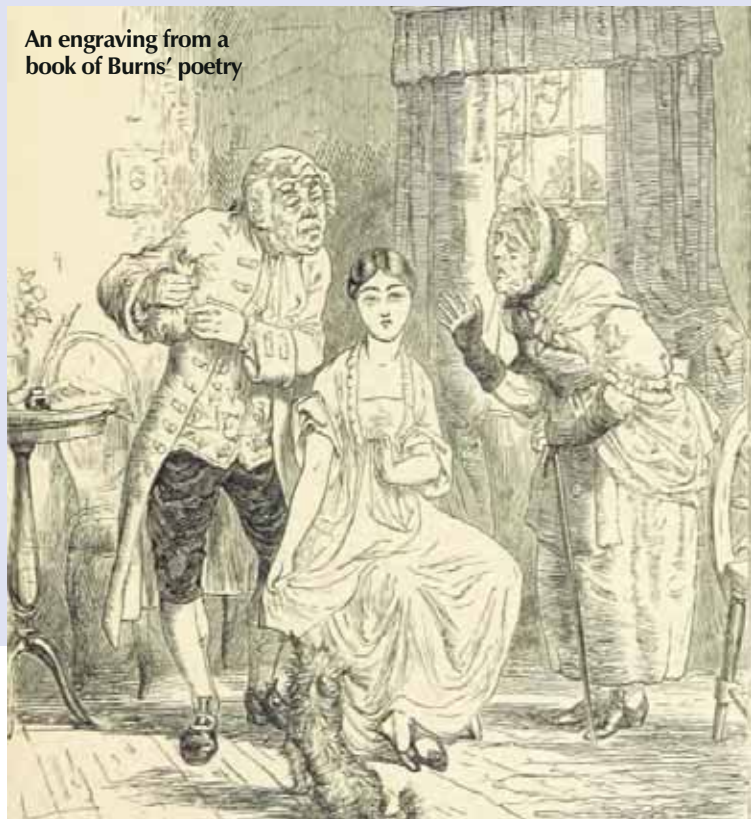
St Valentine's forearm rests in a church in Glasgow. The wealthy French Catholic family who originally owned the relic donated it to the Franciscan Church in 1868. The recipients, in turn, gifted it to a new church of their order taking shape in Scotland at that time. There, at St Francis'

Church in the Gorbals, it remained until it was transferred to the Blessed John Duns Scotus Church on Ballater Street in 1993. And many a marriage proposal has been made before the wooden casket that houses the remains, with February 14 seen as an auspicious time to do so.

Sweet Tradition

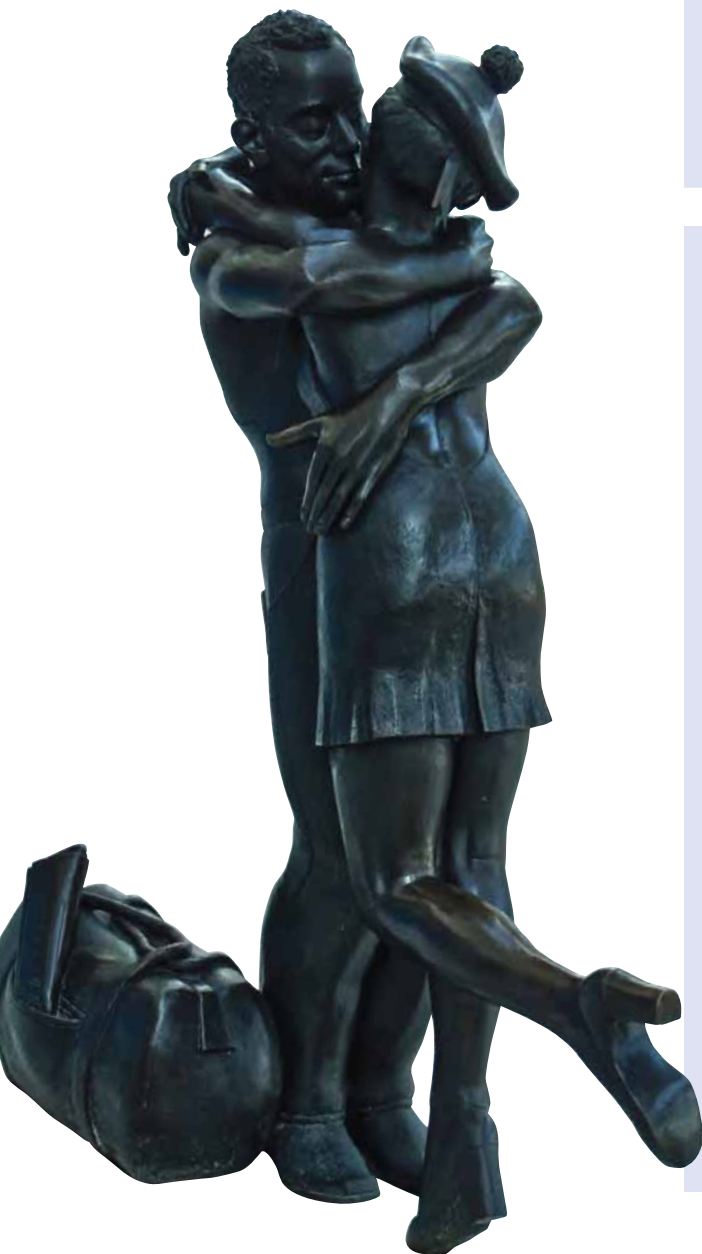
Valentine's dealing was defined by *Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary* in 1887 as "a custom observed on St Valentine's eve whereby the names of the members of a company of both sexes are written on slips of paper and then chosen by lot by the opposite sex, the person whose name was drawn supposedly becoming the drawer's sweetheart for the year". Robert Burns references the tradition in his 1788 poem *Tam Glen*, writing, "Yestreen at the Valentine's dealing, My heart to my mou' gied a sten; For thrice I drew ane without failing, And thrice it was written, Tam Glen." »

An engraving from a book of Burns' poetry



Smooching Statue

St Valentine Terrace in Glasgow is but a stone's throw from the building that housed the martyr's relics for more than 100 years – St Francis' Church. Following a £1.3 million investment in 1998, it is now St Francis Community Centre. Together with the St Valentine connection, *Wincher's Stance* is another feature that adds to Glasgow's reputation as a city of love. The bronze form of a young couple locked in an embrace welcomes visitors to Buchanan Bus Station. It is the work of the aptly-named John Clinch, and Susan Ritchie won the right to name it in a competition.



Wincher's Stance



King James VI

A Valentine To Avoid

The recipient of a valentine in 16th-century Scotland would be likely to meet it with a grimace. Back then, a valentyne was a writ, listing suspected criminals and requiring their overlord or master to apprehend them. The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland (1587) decrees

that the justice clerk should twice yearly "procure the kingis maiesties clois valentynis to be send to the maisteris, landislordis, baillies and chiftanes of all notable lymmeris (rogues) and thevis". One writ from 1569, during the reign of King James VI, reads: "Williame Dowglas... We charge you... To... present before ws... Thomas Irland... upoun the sext day nixtefir the presenting of this valentyne."



Catharine's kiss

An Attempted Abduction

The Fair Maid Of Perth – or *St Valentine's Day* – is one of Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* novels. It was inspired by the Battle of the North Inch, where a feud between rival clans reached a bloody climax on the banks of the Tay in September 1396. The eponymous fair maid is Catharine Glover, daughter of a glovemaker in Perth, who kisses armourer Henry Smith, while he is sleeping, on Valentine's Day. But Catharine has caught the eye of the Duke of Rothesay and, when Smith interrupts an attempted abduction, the armourer is drawn simultaneously into royal intrigue and Highland feuds. 

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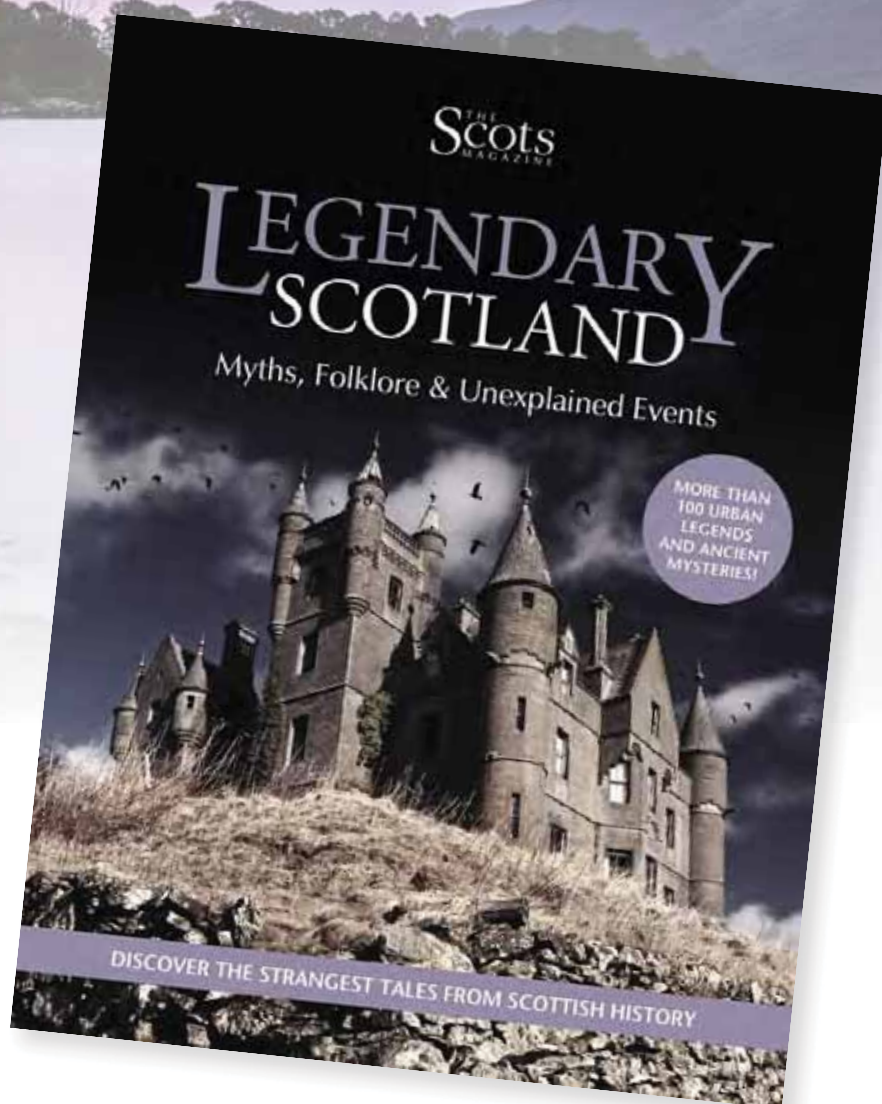


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A^{to}Z —of— GREAT SCOTS



Dr Evelyn McNicol

E Dr Evelyn McNicol sought joy, not glory, as part of a pioneering band of female climbers

by LAURA BROWN

It was the call that put Dr Evelyn McNicol into the history books.

When her pal Betty Stark called her at work one day in 1952 to ask if she wanted to go to the Himalaya, the busy doctor agreed immediately.

In 1955, Evelyn – known by her maiden name, Camrass – set out with Betty and Monica Jackson on the first all-women expedition to the region.



Supported by Sherpa guides and porters – including one Sherpani, in keeping with the spirit of this female-fronted mission – they negotiated glacier valleys and gorges, and revised incorrect maps.

They made the first ascent of a 6151-metre (20,180 feet) peak they named Gyalgen in honour of Mingma Gyalgen – their Sirdar, or lead Sherpa. Altitude sickness

Other Greats...

Edwin G Lucas

In recent years, the art world has rediscovered the work of this exciting and little-known painter, who is now hailed as Scotland's forgotten surrealist.



Elsie Cook

The first secretary of the Scottish Women's Football

Association and the first manager of our national women's team, Elsie's fight for equality on and off the pitch helped change the face of footie.

Eka Gordon-Cumming

A writer and artist who gleaned painting tips from Edwin Landseer, intrepid Morayshire woman Eka – real name Constance – travelled around the world documenting the places she visited.

“She had already scaled challenging peaks in Europe”

This trio sought joy, not glory. But the realisation that they were blazing a trail for female climbers helped them secure funding, as well as a few raised eyebrows from those who didn't believe women could, or should, tackle such an ambitious feat.

Hugely skilled and meticulously prepared, all three were members of the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club.

Team doctor Evelyn had become a keen mountaineer during her university days. Though the youngest of the group at 28, she had already scaled challenging peaks around Scotland and Europe, including an expedition to Norway's Lyngen peninsula with Betty in 1954.

Armed with basic equipment by today's standards, and sporting colourful hats – green for Evelyn, Monica in red, and yellow for Betty – they made their way from Kathmandu with their sights set on the Jugal Himal, a region hitherto unexplored by Western climbers.

sadly prevented Evelyn from reaching the summit, but she investigated other parts of the region, and returned triumphant.

For Evelyn, marriage, motherhood and a return to her work as an obstetrician beckoned – but she loved skiing and watersports, started dog-sledding in her 60s and became a scuba diver in her 70s. She even revisited the Himalaya.

Courageous Dr Evelyn McNicol died in Inverness in 2021, aged 94.

She was the last surviving member of this pioneering band who moved mountains to venture where no woman had climbed before. **S**



Evelyn checks a Sherpa

Pictures: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

On Home Ground

Cailean Steed has realised a childhood dream of becoming a writer – and returning to Scotland has been the inspiration

by DAWN GEDDES

HOME is where the heart is, as the saying goes – but what if that home isn't a place of safety, and is somewhere to be feared instead?

That's the question at the centre of Cailean Steed's compelling debut novel, *Home*. The thriller about a young woman's attempt to rescue her sister from the cult they grew up in deals with important themes – including memory, belonging and finding your true home.

The author, who is originally from Aberdeenshire, says, "I've always wanted to be a writer. I used to write loads of stories when I was a kid and would force my parents to read them!

"When I was younger, I was always really confident that I would be an author one day, but then I grew up, went to uni and got a job – and that ambition was put on the back burner.

"Then, in 2016, I was in a job that I wasn't very happy in. I was looking to put my energy into something else,



Cailean Steed

so I decided to go back to university part-time and do a Masters in creative writing. As an adult, I'd started to think that writing would only be a hobby for me, but completing my Masters helped me believe in it again."

Cailean started to pursue writing, publishing a number of short stories and penning the award-winning audio drama, *RealBoy*, which is a futuristic retelling of *Pinocchio*.

"Eventually, I decided to turn my hand to a book. As a teenager, I wrote three novels – which are now locked away in a cupboard somewhere! I should probably burn them! But *Home*

is the first novel that I ever completed as an adult."

Home centres around the character of Zoe, who is trying to build a new life for herself. Then someone breaks into her flat – a man she thought she'd never have to see again. They call him the Hand of God.

Somehow, he knows about her job, her life in Dublin,

“The literary scene in Scotland is fantastic”



her ex-girlfriend and even the knife she's hidden under the mattress.

She thought she'd left him far behind, along with the cult of the Children and their isolated compound, Home – but now he's found her, and Zoe realises she must go back with him if she's to rescue the sister who helped her escape originally.

But returning to Home means going back to the enforced worship and strict gender roles Zoe has long since moved beyond, back to the abuse and indoctrination she's fought desperately to overcome.

Going back will make her question everything she believed about her past – but could also risk her hard-won freedom. Can she break free a second time?

The masterfully-written book is both enthralling and devastating in equal turns. But why did the writer choose to put a cult at the heart of the novel?

“I think I've always been fascinated by religion in general,” Cailean says. “I didn't grow up religious, so it has always seemed quite exotic and intriguing to me.

“Obviously, cults are not the same as your average religion, but I do find them really fascinating. The idea

that people can be so drawn in and abandon everything for this one ideology really interests me. You might assume that it's only particularly gullible people that join cults, but actually all sorts of people become members.”

Cailean says the theme of home, and what that means, was the starting point for the novel.

“*Home* grew out of something that I wrote when I was a teenager, which was really quite different from the finished book. The character was in a secret government facility that trained child assassins – because that seemed like a really plausible story to me when I was 13!

“I suppose I'm very interested in the idea of closed systems, where people are so isolated that they make their own rules as a result.”

Did Cailean have to do a lot of research, to make the cult of the Children feel so real?

“I read a lot of books and articles on cults, I watched documentaries and I looked at some forums online where people discussed their different experiences.

“I tried to find out as much as I could about how a cult is defined – and what makes it different to any other kind of group,” Cailean says. »





“I’m very interested in the idea of closed systems, where people are isolated”

“I wanted to know what the characteristics are, what the experience is like for people who get caught up in them and also for the people who do leave.

“I’m very interested in perspective and the idea that two people will have very different experiences of the same thing. That’s why I included the dual perspective in the book. The older version of Zoe sees things very differently to the younger version of her.

“I also tried to include other characters who – for whatever reason – fit into the cult and make it work for them. Their experiences are very different to the one that Zoe has.”

As well as being a novelist, Cailean also works as an English teacher.

“When I wrote the first draft of *Home*, I was working as a teacher full-time, but now I only work four days a week. I have one day a week that is completely dedicated to writing and then the rest of the book work is squeezed in here and there – who needs sleep!

“I’m fortunate that teaching is a creative profession. It’s not creative in the same way that writing is creative, but it still engages those muscles.

“It’s challenging to juggle both things at the same time, but I’m very lucky to have an incredibly supportive husband who takes on an awful lot of the domestic and childcare tasks, so that I can sit down and really focus on my writing.”

Now, Cailean is working on another dual narrative novel, and says, “This time it’s written from the point of view of two different characters. One is a woman who is a young widow, who is trying to find a way to say goodbye to her husband.

“The other character is a girl who has recently lost her mother and is drawn into this world. She discovers that her mother has run away and was trying to protect her from something.”

The book will explore themes of grief and loss – two issues that Cailean feels aren’t discussed enough.

“Often when people experience a loss, they’re expected to get over it quickly and not mention it again. I wanted to write something that really explores those issues.”

After living in Dublin for a while, Cailean now lives in Helensburgh, near Glasgow – and returning to Scotland has had a positive influence on their work.

“Since I’ve come back to Scotland, I’ve really pursued my writing in a professional sense,” Cailean says. “The literary scene in Scotland is fantastic and the writers here are so lovely and supportive of each other.

“It feels like a real privilege to become a small part of that.”



▲ *Home* by Cailean Steed is published by Raven Bloomsbury and is out now. 📖



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Scottish Bookshelf



Wisp Elizabeth Mostyn £16 P'KABOO PUBLISHERS

Set in St Andrews, the protagonists in this mystery are academics on the brink of retirement.

The story begins in 1982 with an accident in a lab, before fast forwarding to 2014 when professor of microbiology Ben Furness has a vision, which even the languid dean of divinity cannot explain.

Upset, Ben stumbles upon a lost child – but when he visits the police the following day, there are no missing person reports.

What is real and what is not becomes fudged in this complicated story exploring the harrowing effects of dementia.

In her debut Elizabeth Mostyn – scientist, phenomenologist and

“Something menacing is lurking in the labs”

descendant of Bram Stoker – uses her own life experiences to conjure up images of a sleepy town, with something menacing lurking in the labs.

Desperately lonely since the death of wife Free, and disappearance of daughter Wisp, Ben decides to dig deeper – despite concerns raised about his mental health by seldom-seen niece, Christabel, a secret agent from New York.

Meantime, a journalist from *The Scotsman* receives a threatening phone call from the MoD dissuading her from further contact with Ben, hinting at a vast cover-up operation.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

The tabloid press, FBI and MoD become embroiled, while Ben appears continually confused.

I was, too, as other characters and sub-plots introduce romance, intertwined with ethical practice and scientific experiments, while supernatural explanations are provided by nearby nuns.

Mostyn manages to balance complicated issues, involving serious threats of crimes against humanity, with humour and pathos, while the St Andrews setting provides enough realism to keep you grounded as the story enticingly falls into a *Stranger Things*-esque realm for disparate intellectuals.

This novel is essentially about loss, trauma, love, loneliness and relationships. It ends with an exciting finale, but the truth that emerges in the closing pages reveals an ultimate release.

By Loretta Mulholland



Elegies Carol Ann Duffy £10.99 Hardback PAN MACMILLAN

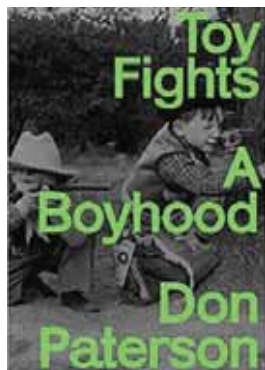
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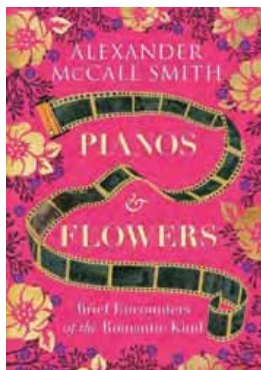
First for fact and fiction



Toy Fights: A Boyhood Don Paterson

£16.99 Hardback
FABER & FABER

Don Paterson's memoir is named after the game kids used to play when he was growing up in 1960s Dundee. Documenting the first 20 years of the Scots poet's life, it's a story of family, the working class, money, and all the things people do to avoid boredom.



Pianos And Flowers Alexander McCall Smith

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BIRLINN

The beloved author invites us to glimpse a world long departed. In these stories, inspired by long-lost photographs, the lives of those in the frame are imagined and explored. From Glasgow slums to Egyptian relics, love, friendship and happiness are the central themes.



Land Of Stone Roger Emmerson

£25
LUATH

A journey of remarkable buildings and remarkable thoughts about these buildings, shaped as they are by deep time, modern ideas and Scottish culture – from the “granny tops” of the tenements’ chimneys to the sustainable new builds of today, and everything in between.



Hear No Evil Sarah Smith

£9.99
TWO ROADS

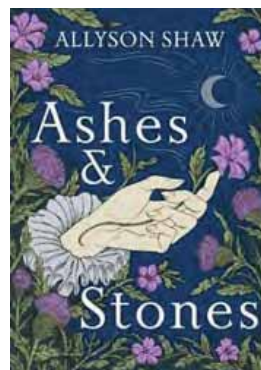
Based on a landmark case in Scottish legal history, a young deaf woman is seen throwing a child into the Clyde in 1817. Talented teacher Robert Kinniburgh must find a way to communicate with her, and uncover the truth before it's too late.



A Winter Grave Peter May

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QUERCUS

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Ashes And Stones Allyson Shaw

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HODDER & STOUGHTON

A moving and personal journey, along rugged coasts and through remote villages and cities, in search of the traces of those accused of witchcraft in 17th-century Scotland. Allyson Shaw untangles the myth of witchcraft and gives a voice to those erased by it. »

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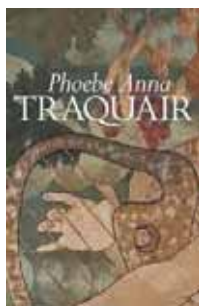
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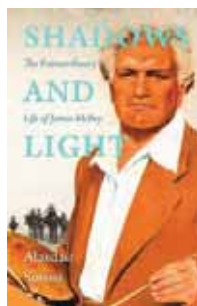
Scottish Bookshelf

Books In Brief



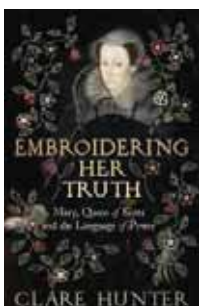
Phoebe Anna Traquair **Elizabeth Cumming**

A compelling new account of the life and career of Irish-born artist Phoebe Anna Traquair, who became a leading figure in Scotland's Arts and Crafts movement. **£19.99, National Galleries of Scotland**



Shadows And Light **Alasdair Soussi**

The first biography of Aberdeenshire-born painter and printmaker James McBey – famed as a creative genius, accomplished war artist, adventurer and dashing lover. **£29.99, Scotland Street Press**



Embroidering Her Truth **Clare Hunter**

A fresh look at Mary, Queen of Scots, reveals how she used textiles and fabric to create an image of martyrdom and relay hidden messages to her supporters. **£20, Hardback, Hodder & Stoughton**



100 Masterpieces **John Leighton**

A lavish look at 100 of the National Galleries of Scotland's best-loved treasures, with many of the greatest names in Western art represented. **£24.99, National Galleries of Scotland** 

Next Month in *The Scots Magazine*...

PLACES



Explore the stunning far north of Scotland in our 14-page special

CULTURE



Get ready to laugh at Glasgow International Comedy Festival

PEOPLE



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Pictures: ALAMY

ON SALE FEBRUARY 9, 2023

THE
Scots
MAGAZINE



Feeling Philosophical

Hamish Hawk finds success exploring signals from the universe

FOR the first time in an almost decade-long career, Hamish Hawk is wondering how you're supposed to follow up a hit record.

Last year was a pretty exceptional one for the Edinburgh-based songwriter. With the pandemic delaying a planned album release until September 2021 he set out to catch up in some style, spending much of 2022 touring the length of the UK three times over and clocking up a string of summer festival slots.

Heavy Elevator was Scottish Album of the Year 2021 by *The Skinny* magazine and earned a 2022 SAY Award shortlisting, and each of its three singles were playlisted by tastemaker radio station BBC Radio 6 Music.

And it all kicks off again this month with the release of follow-up *Angel Numbers*, alongside a tour which takes Hamish and his band – guitarist Andrew Pearson, drummer and keyboardist Stefan Maurice and bassist

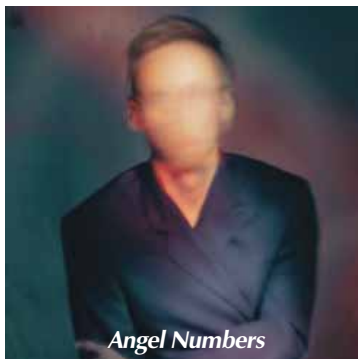
Alex Duthie – from Brighton back up to Aberdeen.

"*Heavy Elevator* was the product of quite a few years of songwriting, and I knew I was excited about it, but I could never have imagined it would take off in the way it has," he says. "When I was performing mostly solo, I used to joke that I would wake up in the morning and make an effort to push a boulder up a hill, but these days I wake up and it's like the boulder is already rolling – which is something I'm having to get used to!"

"Playing gigs, seeing people in the audience singing along and enjoying themselves – it's absolutely brilliant.

"And it doesn't seem to be slowing down, even as we move into the wintry months," he adds, alluding

to two fresh announcements that were made just ahead of our conversation: a slot at Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations and supporting The Proclaimers on their summer 2023 "Big Top"



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Left: Hamish Hawk

shows in Kelso, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Recorded once again with Idlewild's Rod Jones at his Post Electric Studios in Edinburgh, *Angel Numbers* is the product of a songwriting "purple patch" Hamish and the band found themselves in during lockdown.

The record takes its name from what believers see as recurring numerical patterns: those "lucky" numbers that crop up on street signs or doorways, like cosmic pings from the universe.

It is also, says Hamish, something of a "sister record" to *Heavy Elevator*. "If the central image of that album was the elevator so laden with baggage that it struggled to move upwards, the past impeding future progress, on *Angel Numbers* we're still in the elevator, but actually moving upwards – albeit not at the speed of light," he says. "As much as it's about notions of success and ambition, and desire and fame and faith, it's also about people who have been in my life – 'guardian angels', as it were – and the things that I have learned from those people."

If that all sounds a bit philosophical, then you're

“It's about the
'guardian angels'
in my life”

starting to get the hang of it – but the lyrical dream sequence visitations from '68 Comeback Special Elvis or US indie legend Bill Callahan that pepper the album never come at the expense of a clever turn of phrase, or the showmanship that closer collaboration with a band now allows Hamish to bring to his live performances.

The artist who once self-released more traditional singer-songwriter fayre under the name Hamish James Hawk is now just as often mentioned in the same sentence as the stage presence of Alex Kapranos and the witticisms of The Divine Comedy or The Magnetic Fields.

"Involving other people allows me to realise the songs I walk around with in my head much more easily," he says. "We're making songs that I couldn't even have imagined back in my 20s. It feels exactly right."

***Angel Numbers* is out on February 3 on Post Electric. Hamish Hawk is on tour from February 1 including shows in Dundee (Church), Glasgow (St Luke's) and Aberdeen (Cafe Drummond). 📍**

On Our Radar



Juliette Lemoine

Juliette Lemoine

The cellist aims to "explore and redefine" her instrument's role within Scottish music, leading an all-star band on recently-released debut album *Soaring*. She performs in Stirling and Glasgow this month, ahead of a busy spring of folk festival dates.

10 Years of Lost Map

The Eigg-based label marks a decade of inventive music with an all-day showcase across both venues at Glasgow's Oran Mor on February 5. Performances promised from ballboy, Free Love, Savage Mansion, LT Leif and label boss Pictish Trail and more.

Fergus McCreadie Trio

The Scottish Album of the Year award-winning and Mercury shortlisted jazz pianist – who features on Juliette Lemoine's new album – embarks on a run of UK dates this month.

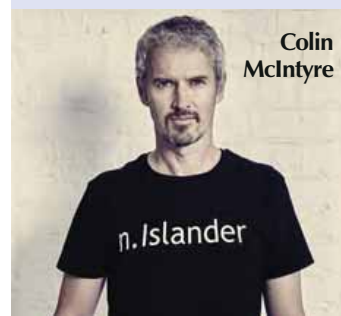
Mull Historical Society

Colin McIntyre marks 21 years since the release of debut album *Loss* with a show at St Luke's, Glasgow on February 3. Vinyl reissues of the first three Mull Historical Society albums follow with *Archaeology*, a media book and 80-track completist's collection of every MHS release between 2000 and 2004.

Hen Hoose

The Tamara Schlesinger-led female and non-binary collective recently announced a second phase of the project with Tracyanne Campbell (Camera Obscura), Rachel Aggs (Sacred Paws) and Rachel Sermanni

joining an expanded lineup of artists. Catch some of the Hens live at St Luke's, Glasgow on February 4.



Colin McIntyre



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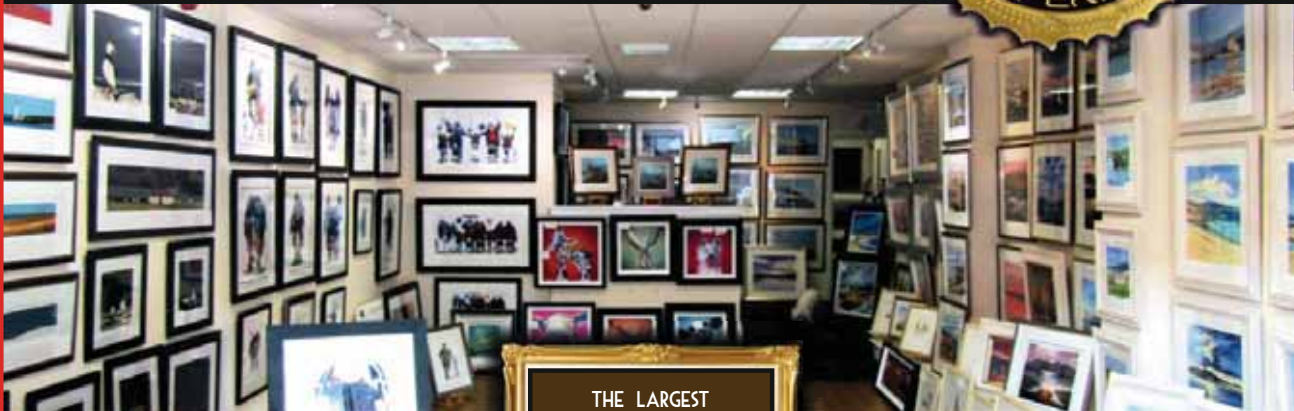
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Brochan bread

by the Hebridean Baker

This is an excellent loaf to make if you find yourself with some leftover porridge. The porridge makes the loaf extra rich, with a terrific crust and a chewy, moist texture to the crumb.

INGREDIENTS

200g (7oz) cold leftover porridge
300ml (1¼ cups) lukewarm water

500g (1lb 2oz) strong white bread flour, plus extra for dusting

½ tablespoon caster sugar

2 teaspoons sea salt

7g (½ oz) dried yeast

Small handful of porridge oats to sprinkle

Oil for greasing

Tip the dough out onto a lightly oiled surface and knock it back. Then fold and knead for a minute.

Shape the loaf and, with the seams of the dough at the bottom, transfer to an oiled 900g (2lb) loaf tin and scatter the top with a few oats. Cover with the damp tea towel and rest for a further 45 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C fan (425°F).

Slash the top with a sharp knife and place in the oven. Bake for 10 minutes, then turn the heat down to 170°C fan (375°F) and cook for a further 30 minutes until golden brown. The loaf sounds hollow when tapped. Cool on a wire rack.

METHOD

Add the porridge into a bowl with the water. Stir in the flour, sugar, salt and yeast until combined. Cover with a damp tea towel and leave to prove for 1 hour; it should double in size.



The Hebridean Baker is Coinneach MacLeod who was born and raised on the Isle of Lewis.

Inspired by traditional family recipes and homegrown produce, Coinneach rose to fame as the Hebridean Baker on Tik Tok in 2020. He has motivated his worldwide followers to bake, forage, learn Gaelic, enjoy a dram or two of whisky and to seek a more wholesome, simple life.

The new Hebridean Baker cookbook, My Scottish Island Kitchen, is packed with wonderful stories and photography and includes more than 70 recipes divided into chapters including Scottish recipes, cakes and biscuits, cosy weekend dishes, bread & scones, afternoon tea recipes and much more.

You'll also find a selection of Hebridean Baker recipes on our website: hamlynsoats.co.uk



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Slàinte Mhath



The Power Of Love

Acclaimed Japanese whisky Nikka owes its creation to a fairytale romance that began in a small Scottish town

by EUAN DUGUID

AS the nation's romantics prepare to mark Valentine's Day, a 100-year-old tale of love – spanning the globe, from Scotland to Japan – continues to resonate.

And uisge beatha is woven like a golden thread through an unbreakable union that survived personal tumult, upheaval and the horrors of war.

I first heard of Masataka Taketsuru and Rita Cowan's fateful meeting from my old pal, Misako Udo, a few years ago. Acclaimed whisky author Misako – herself from Japan and now a native of Edinburgh – explained that the stars began to align with the advent of mechanised warfare.

Rita was the daughter of a local doctor and lived in one of Kirkintilloch's finest town houses with her three siblings. Many young men of her generation were killed in the First World War, including her fiancé.

Then, in 1918, Rita's father died of a heart attack – and the family found itself in difficult financial straits. Her mother was forced to look for ways of making ends meet.

Olive Checkland's book *Japanese Whisky, Scotch Blend*, offers an account of the ensuing turn of events.

Despite stern judgement from her conservative neighbours, Mrs Cowan accepted a lodger.



Nikka whisky

Enter the dashing Masataka Taketsuru, an articulate 25-year-old from Japan, who had recently enrolled at the University of Glasgow.

Masataka had been sent to Scotland by his company to learn whisky-making techniques and bring them back home to Japan.

It's been speculated that perhaps Masataka might well have been lonely, so far from all that was dear. Maybe, it's been said, Rita felt suffocated by her difficult family situation and, with the arrival of the handsome, go-getting Masataka, she found an escape.

My reckoning is more simplistic – a potent chemistry overcame the pair. To quote the late Michael Hutchence, of INXS fame, two worlds collided...

The reverberation of this cataclysmic meeting was felt back in Japan. It quickly became clear this was a couple that could never, truly, be torn apart. Masataka had broken off his engagement – to his boss's daughter, no less – and set his mind to stay in Scotland permanently.

But Rita had other ideas. History has it that, deeply in love and supportive of Masataka's whisky dreams, Rita urged him to return to his country. Despite not speaking a word of Japanese and suffering poor health, Rita left Scotland with Masataka for Japan in November 1920.

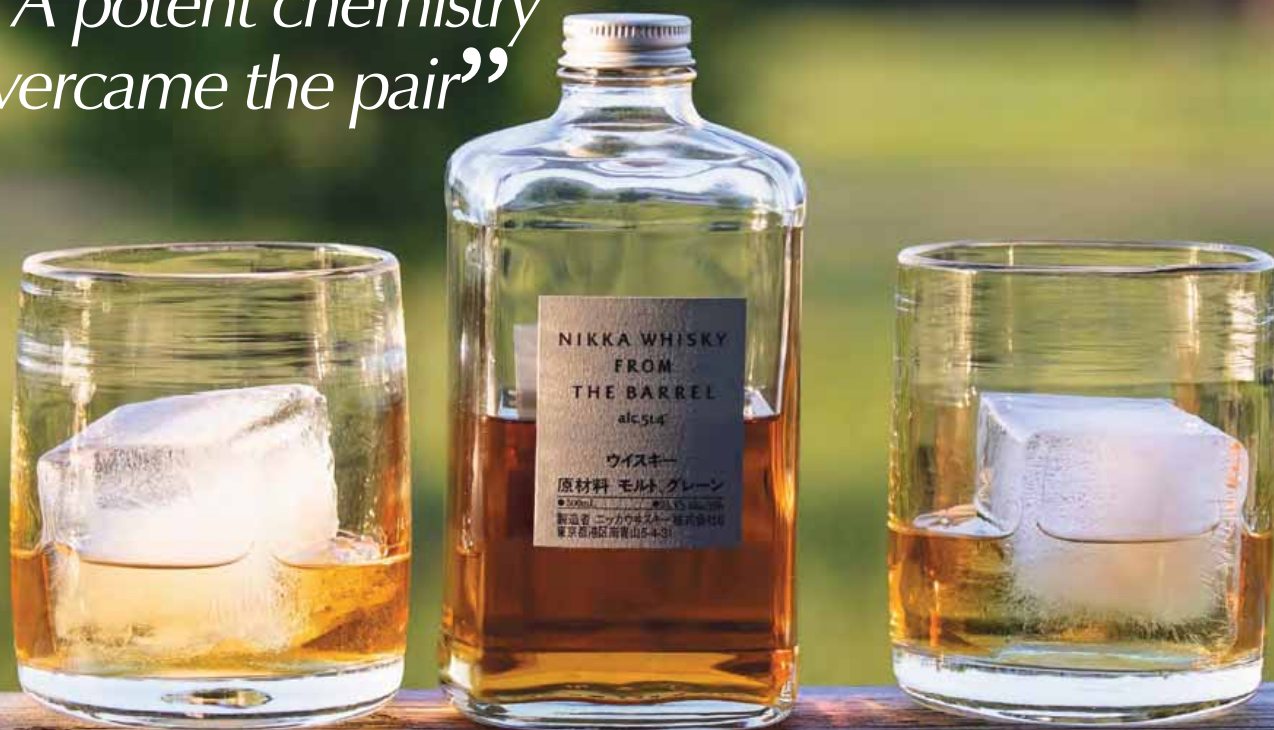


Masataka and Rita



Nikka whisky barrels

*“A potent chemistry
overcame the pair”*



I remember watching old reels of families emigrating to America in the long-gone days of hard miles and slow communication, and the sense of permanent separation was palpable. The decision for Rita to leave her family must have been similarly heart-wrenching.

But the power of love prevailed – and the newly-married couple arrived in Japan.

Undoubtedly steeled by his new wife’s extraordinary all-or-nothing conviction, Masataka turned his mind and energies to making his own spirit with gusto.

In 1934 he built his first distillery in Yoichi, Hokkaido, in the north of Japan. The environmental conditions were in many ways similar to those of Scotland, with a cool climate, crisp air and perfect humidity.

In 1936 Japan’s first pot still designed by Masataka – drawing on his Scottish studies – was installed and started distillation.

Finally, in 1940, the first whisky from Nikka was launched – marking Rita and Masataka’s ascension to malt royalty.

Plot twist. Wider global events were to conspire once again with the advent of the Second World War. By now a Japanese citizen, Rita had avoided internment, but was nonetheless regarded with suspicion as a possible spy by the Japanese. She was shunned.

But Rita and Masataka remained unbreakable, and the end of the war saw the distillery grow from strength to strength.

Nikka set the standard for Japanese whisky – which, today, continues to rival Scotch in blind tastings. And the Nikka dram still endures, owned by the Asahi firm, which runs the Ben Nevis Distillery in Fort William.

Sadly, the couple’s story came to an end in 1961 when Rita died after a long struggle with liver disease.

A distraught and heartbroken Masataka survived her by 18 years. Today they are buried together on a hillside near the distillery.

I give the last words to Misako. She says, “Without Rita, I don’t think Masataka would have achieved what he did and would not have built his own distillery. She helped him a lot, both practically and emotionally. She was his rock.

“Love. Well, it conquers all.” 🍷

Euan Downs A Dram

Nikka Whisky From The Barrel blend bursts with flavour. Bottled at 51.4% ABV, the blend combines both single malt and grain whisky from the Miyagikyo and Yoichi distilleries. The marriage in a variety of casks – including bourbon barrels and sherry butts, as well as refill hogsheads – elicits a stunning depth of flavour.

Pictures: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY

Scottish Kitchen

Seafood Heaven

No matter what time of year you serve scallops, they will always taste fresh and impress a crowd

I THINK I speak on behalf of the entire Pierhouse team when I say how lucky we feel to live and work in such a beautiful part of Scotland.

We affectionately call The Pierhouse “Seafood Heaven” because we are in such a fantastic location for serving up the finest Scottish seafood, overlooking the pristine waters of Loch Linnhe.

Rarely are restaurants so close to their suppliers that they welcome them in from the boats a few steps from the door to the kitchen – or have their own lobster creels at the end of the pier.

When we say we love local, we mean it. This not only applies to our seafood, but to the farmers who supply us with wonderful produce, to the locally-made ice cream we serve on our dessert menu, to the fruit and vegetables we grow or forage ourselves.

This particular dish celebrates everything that makes The Pierhouse and our local produce so special. It doesn't matter what time of year you serve it, it will always taste super fresh and impress a crowd.

A couple of top tips to help things run smoothly – firstly, ask your fishmonger to remove the scallop meat from the shells but keep the orange roe on the side of the main white meat – you'll need it later.

Secondly, if you haven't had a go at making salsa verde before, now is your chance. It's so easy and, time allowing, you can change it up and really make it your own.

It's also great to have a jar kicking around to dress salad, or just to dip some crusty bread in – so I would always advise you to make more than you need. 🍴

Don't miss another great recipe from a new star chef next month!



Michael Leathley is head chef at **The Pierhouse Hotel & Seafood Restaurant, Port Appin.**

Scallops, Roasted Roe Velouté And Mussels In Salsa Verde

Ingredients – serves 6

- 3 scallops with roe on per person, depending on size
- 200g mussels
- Oil
- Butter
- Sprig of thyme

For the velouté

- 10ml rapeseed oil
- 32 scallop roes
- 2 finely-chopped shallots
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 400ml white wine
- 100g unsalted butter, chilled and cut into cubes
- 200ml double cream

For the salsa verde

- 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley
- 1 bunch mint
- 1 bunch dill – add any other herbs to your taste
- 10 cloves of garlic
- Large hand full of capers
- 4 fillets of anchovies – add more to taste, instead of salt
- 100ml olive oil
- 200ml rapeseed oil
- Good quality sea salt

Method

1. Gently remove the roe and solid cartilage from the side of the scallops. Discard the black vein and tough cartilage so all you have is the orange roe and white medallion of scallop meat. Then gently wash and pat dry.
2. To make the velouté, lightly salt the roes. Heat a heavy-based pan with a little oil and fry them with shallots and garlic until they are a dark golden colour.



3. Deglaze the pan with around 400ml white wine and reduce by half. Pour in the double cream and bring to a gentle simmer. Using a stick blender, blend to a sauce and, while still hot, pass through a fine sieve and return to a clean pot.
4. For the salsa verde, use a stick blender to combine all herbs, garlic, capers, anchovies and a large pinch of salt. Slowly add olive oil and rapeseed oil and blend into a smooth sauce. If it remains thick, add a little more oil until it's smooth and silky. Check the seasoning and add more anchovies for saltiness if required.
5. Bring the remaining ingredients to the boil in a pan with a lid and steam open mussels, then remove them from their shells. Coat the mussels with the salsa verde.
6. Just before serving, reheat your velouté and keep warm until the scallops are ready.
7. Heat a frying pan with a little oil and, just before the oil starts to smoke, add your scallops. Leave lots of space to get a nice golden colour on them. When the first side has a good crust, turn the scallops and add a knob of butter and sprig of thyme. When the butter bubbles baste the scallops and then remove them to a sheet of kitchen paper.
8. Finally, pour the velouté on to a warmed plate and spoon the mussels over. Add the scallops and enjoy.

Eat, Drink, Sleep...The Reviews

by RACHEL McCONACHIE

AWAY from the bustle and noise of the capital's city centre, The Bonham hotel is a haven of luxury and peace in Edinburgh's West End.

Set among the gorgeous Georgian architecture and overlooking a small park, the hotel is just a 10-minute walk from shops, restaurants and great pubs and cafés.

After parking round the back in the hotel's own car park and then exploring the maze of corridors to find reception – it is deceptively large inside – we discovered lavish decor, chandeliers everywhere you looked and a warm welcome.

They also have a deal with a nearby NCP car park to provide reasonably priced parking in case their own car park is full – an important consideration when travelling by car to Edinburgh.

Originally constructed in 1872, this boutique hotel recently underwent a multi-million-pound refurbishment, carrying the elegance of the listed building into the 21st century.

Fortunately there is a lift and we found our

The Bonham

Edinburgh

Sumptuous luxury nestled in the peaceful West End



room easily, which was as sumptuous as we expected from what we'd seen so far.

We had a view north looking out to the Firth of Forth and Fife, where we had travelled from. This was particularly lovely in the morning as we watched the light change over the water and the Lomond hills while enjoying the cafetière coffee with fresh milk supplied in the room.

Another small but important delight were the luxury chocolates and

fresh strawberries that awaited us when we arrived. After a long drive in terrible weather they were quickly devoured!

The bathroom has a rainfall shower and a bath with Arran Aromatics toiletries, a welcome addition. The room and whole hotel is very warm and cosy – in fact, we had to open the window overnight, even in winter.

After freshening up, we went down to the bar for an aperitif and found there were lots of tempting nooks and

crannies in which to relax. The cocktail menu and wine list is extensive and impressive, and the decor throughout the lounge and bar areas is extremely inviting.

You wouldn't even need to go out to find a cool city bar – I'd be happy to stay in the hotel for the evening.

There were lots of groups of people enjoying a drink or a meal – it's clearly popular with all age groups and the staff are very attentive and professional.

HAM

When it was time for dinner we were taken through to a brighter, more airy room with wonderful old paintings on the walls and yet more chandeliers. We chose a window table.

The kitchen was able to deal with my dietary requirements with no problem and we enjoyed a smoked cod starter and tagine for a main.

Service was efficient but not too fast, and it was a very relaxed experience.

Breakfast was in the

same restaurant and offered a continental buffet with Bloody Marys – though we felt it was a tad early even at 10am – and a good selection of cooked dishes.

We both opted for eggs royale – the eggs were perfectly poached, although the Hollandaise lacked flavour.

The much-needed coffee was regularly topped up and we left the hotel feeling refreshed and ready for a day in the city. 

thebonham.com



Double room



Lounge



The restaurant

Smithies Deli

Arbroath



Zak Kennedy enjoys a delicious locally-sourced meal at a cosy deli

FOOD: I ordered a mozzarella, jalapeño and pepperoni mayo panini and my friend had a Cajun chicken wrap with a bowl of cauliflower and leek soup on the side. The menu offers a range of interesting fillings that can be served in a wrap, panini, sandwich or salad. We then also decided to split one of their cheese platters, because you can never have too much cheese! I optimistically ordered a slice of chocolate sponge that I only managed half of. Everything I had was delicious and incredibly filling. **9/10**

SERVICE: The waiting staff were very warm, friendly and made us feel welcome. They also kindly wrapped up the leftover half of my cake in a box for me to take home. **10/10**

AMBIENCE: The deli has recently gone through an expansion, and the new bright and spacious seating area offers a nice contrast to the original deli next door. **9/10**

VALUE FOR MONEY: The meal offered great value for money, with the cake a particular highlight after being given an enormous portion for only £3.50. The panini and wrap were filled to bursting and were very reasonable at £7, with the option to add soup on the side for an additional £2. The cheese platter might be a bit much for one at £10 – but I would definitely recommend it for sharing as a way to indulge in a taste of the wide range of cheeses the deli has to offer. **9/10**

FACILITIES: The facilities were clean and well maintained. **8/10**

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45/50

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Classic Twelve White Wine

White wine fans have plenty of great choices to choose from in this superb mix. South African wines are really in fashion right now thanks to green fruited gems like The Gooseberry Bush while orchard-fresh Campanula is keeping Pinot Grigio at the top of the sales charts. You have two refreshing Chilean gems in Don Cayetano Sauvignon Blanc and Wolf Point Chardonnay while favourites from Portugal and Spain round things off in mouthwatering style.

£92.00 + P&P Code: LWCTW



Classic Twelve Red Wine

A mixed case guaranteed to hit the spot for every red wine fan. You have two Spanish favourites to start in juicy Posada del Rey (from a cellar that also makes top Rioja) and juicy Orange Grove Merlot. Australia provides power-packed The Barbarian Shiraz Merlot while Chile is home to bold, regal Don Cayetano Cabernet Sauvignon. Argentina's damson-scented Santa Julia Malbec and Italy's spicy Il Brutto complete the case in fruit-filled fashion.

£92.00 + P&P Code: LWCTR

Classic Twelve Wine Mix

A 12-bottle case providing something delicious for absolutely everyone. In red, there's southern Italy's rich, spicy Il Brutto, intense The Barbarian from Australia and Spain's plummy Orange Grove Merlot. For white wine fans, there is orchard-fresh Campanula Pinot Grigio alongside Chile's zesty Don Cayetano Sauvignon Blanc and tropical fruit packed Wolf Point Chardonnay.

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Seal Of Approval



The nature reserve at St Abb's Head provides a haven for these remarkable mammals at a critical point in their lives

by POLLY PULLAR

PASSIONATE National Trust for Scotland (NTS) ranger Ciaran Hatsell would instil enthusiasm and zest into even the most apathetic person.

It's one reason he is exactly the right man in the right role working at the glorious NTS reserves at St Abb's Head and the Grey Mare's Tail.

The 32-year-old has a wealth of wildlife experience and a blend of effervescent knowledge.

Originally from Preston in Lancashire, Ciaran's interest was piqued by his father and grandfather, both of whom had a passion for wildlife. Since the start of his working life, firstly as a volunteer at Norfolk's Strumpshaw Fen and subsequently as an assistant ranger, he has travelled widely and worked closely with numerous species.

Some of that work led to trips to Iceland, following the migrations of ringed whooper swans, and spending time in the Farne Islands tagging grey seal pups and monitoring

seabirds. It also led to a role as assistant warden in the place he claims is heaven on Earth – Fair Isle.

"I love Fair Isle more than anywhere, and it's not only for the incredible seabirds, the rare migrants and other wildlife but also due to the people. Fair Isle is a migrant haven where Siberia and the USA converge, and you never know what might turn up."

Though Ciaran claims that Fair Isle is his favourite place, he is no less passionate about his role as head ranger at the National Nature Reserve, St Abb's Head on the Berwickshire coast, where he has been for four years.

Seabirds tell us much about the health of our oceans and the wider environment. Currently, with the added horror of avian flu, there are concerns about how this might affect precious colonies in the forthcoming season.

St Abb's is home to extraordinary geology, wildflowers and thousands of breeding birds, but is also a haven for »

A young pup with its mother



St Abb's Head



mammals. When summer is over and the guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes and fulmars have gone, it transforms into a shelter for thousands of breeding grey seals.

Ciaran chats as we walk towards the seal beaches. Grey seals come ashore to breed here in late October and November. A single pup is born after a nine-month gestation period and delayed implantation.

The pup emerges with a yellowish-white natal coat called the lanugo, which is shed at weaning time after nearly three weeks. The pup quickly finds its mother's teat and feeds many times a day, growing at an astonishing rate on milk with a 60% fat content. The mother, who fasts during the suckling period, shrinks by around four kilograms daily while her pup blossoms.

This fascinating example of energy transfer means that, quickly, the pup can take to the sea and is independent.

Some of the pups that lie closest to the sea and rock pools will have an advantage – they have the chance for short practice swims before they are thrown in at the deep end when suddenly weaned at three weeks old.

The views of the breeding beaches are breathtaking. Through binoculars, we enter another world – a melee of seals – creamy-coloured pups of varying sizes, as well as anxious, protective cows and rampant bulls.

Some noticeably fat pups lie surrounded by a ring of white-moulted fur – they are now ready to take to the sea. Eerie calls of seal vocalisation mingle with those of hungry pups, demanding more milk.

Among the chaos, large, cumbersome bulls – the beach masters – jostle with one another, eagerly awaiting the chance to mate when the cows are receptive to them, towards the end of the suckling period.

Ciaran, who witnesses this fabulous spectacle daily during seal season, still relishes these moments. It is what makes time in his company joyous.

Only the most prominent males will mate with the females, though there are continual battles for supremacy. Cows grumble and growl at each other. Others doze, ignoring the aggression. Some animals are killed in fights, and pups are squashed or separated from their mother.



Main: Pups at varying stages of development

Below: Ciaran Hatsell



“Despite the devastation of Storm Arwen, this breeding season has been good”

“Pup mortality is high, but we never interfere – it’s part of the natural process,” says Ciaran.

“It’s like a nature documentary right in front of us – two of our main aims are to protect wildlife while sharing it with people.

“We put up signage and temporary fencing, carry out daily patrols and host seal weekends. It helps us to engage positively with the public on our key messages. Of course, we want people to be able to enjoy this spectacle, but it is our job to help them do it responsibly.

“Each weekend in seal season, we are out with binoculars and telescopes, helping people view these brilliant beasts. Kids love seeing the pups.

“I hope the children leave here feeling inspired and

motivated, become more involved in nature and, if we are lucky, pursue a career in conservation,” says Ciaran.

“The more we can enthuse them about the natural world, the better. Children are our future ambassadors for wildlife, and we need to inspire them.”

St Abb’s is unique and provides a rare chance for people to see seals from high cliff-top positions without causing any disturbance. This also allows Ciaran and the other team members to carry out critical annual counts.

In 2021, they were in the throes of one such count when Storm Arwen was brewing. The savage wind came in from the north and caused devastation. When Ciaran returned the day after, he found a heartbreaking scene – 846 dead pups, battered and blown into rocky coves, »

Seals use haul outs to restore energy before returning to the sea



floating in the water or piled high among the rocks. Dozens more were doubtless lost at sea.

A significant proportion of the world's population of grey seals is in Scotland. By 1914, numbers had fallen to around 500 due to incessant persecution.

The Grey Seals Protection Act was passed in the same year and, since then, the population has significantly increased. Before the 1850s, large colonies did not exist, but seals moved in as humans were forced to leave remote islands.

It's estimated that there are around 120,000 grey seals in Britain – representing around 40% of the world's population and 95% of the European population.

FASCINATING FACTS

The National Trust for Scotland was founded in 1931, protecting wildlife, gardens, castles and battlefields.

There are two types of seal in Scotland – the larger grey seal and the smaller, more rare, harbour seal.

Harbour seal pups don't spend three weeks on a natal beach, but take to the water just hours after birth.



A seal pup

But entanglement in marine litter, ghost fishing gear and pollution remain constant threats. Propeller injuries can be fatal, while disturbance – including eager photographers or dogs getting too close – can cause harm.

While absorbing the scene, it's easy to think that there are plenty of seals – but this mass congregation only happens once a year. For the remainder, seals disperse far and wide.

It is humans that threaten dwindling fish stocks, not seals.

"The grey seals at St Abb's represent a conservation success story, with around 2000 pups born on the beaches yearly. Records from 2007 show there wasn't a colony here before," says Ciaran. "It's heartening to see that, despite the devastation of Storm Arwen, this breeding season seems to have been good, and there is recovery.

"We must ensure we help that success by keeping breeding areas undisturbed. Our responsibility to monitor, conserve and share these special marine mammals is a real privilege and a challenge we embrace."

We have now driven to a remote part of the coast and walked out to look down on a far bigger colony.

Light fades over the sea, the air is sharp and cold. The laments of the seals carry on the icy wind.

Ciaran smiles and says, "Isn't it awesome?" ❸

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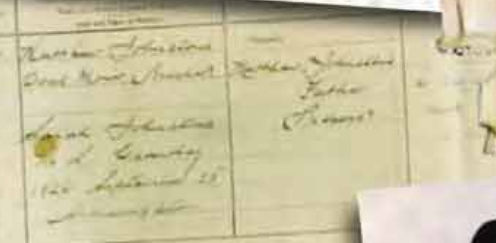
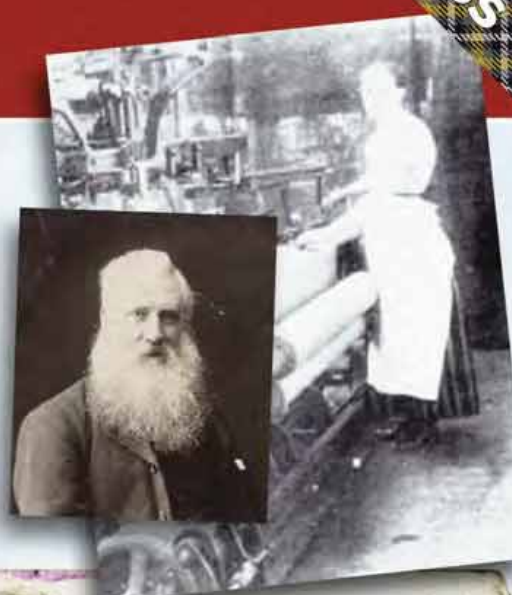
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Get out there and try something new...

Fiona Russell avoids the crowds as she runs past the famous rock formations of the Quiraing, Skye, p110

◆ Rise To The Challenge p100 ◆ Rebels With A Cause p104 ◆ Throw The Game p114

Picture: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



Rise To The Challenge

Outdoor swimmer Scott McQuade set a new record, completing two non-stop lengths of Loch Lomond in aid of a charity close to his heart

by FIONA RUSSELL

A SCOTTISH swimmer is believed to be the first to complete two lengths of iconic Loch Lomond non-stop.

Scott McQuade took 31.5 hours – and 83,268 strokes – to swim an epic 72km (44 miles) from the south end of the freshwater loch to the north, then back again.

In doing so, he has also raised almost £7500 for The Brain Tumour Charity.

Scott, of Wishaw, North Lanarkshire, wanted to give back to the charity that supported his family when eldest son, Ross, suffered a brain tumour in 2016 at the age of 19.

However, the 51-year-old project manager revealed the Loch Lomond Double Swim was much harder than he could have ever imagined.

He says, “I had estimated a time of 24 to 26 hours and you can see from my eventual finish time that it took a lot longer.

“From about the 18-hour mark, I slowed down a lot and I felt very tired. I was swimming on empty.

“The last 50 metres were also extremely tough and I thought I would never reach the shore.”

Scott’s progression towards the impressive challenge

came after a friend talked him into an open water swim almost a decade ago.

While he had been a keen swimmer in childhood, it wasn’t until the two-kilometre (1.2 miles) Great Scottish Swim in Loch Lomond in 2013 that his passion for the sport returned.

Now Scott swims regularly – and year-round – in several different lochs near his home, as well as one of his favourite locations, Loch Lubnaig in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

When training for an event, he supplements long loch swims at the weekends with sessions at Glasgow’s Tollcross Centre, where there is a 50-metre pool.

In 2017, Scott, who is married with two grown-up sons, decided to swim a length of Loch Lomond, from north to south.

He says, “After all the support from The Brain Tumour Charity for Ross, who was fortunate to survive, I decided I wanted to give something back.

“I raised funds by swimming Loch Lomond from top to bottom. It was the furthest I had swum on one go at that point.”

The Loch Lomond Double had been planned for »

“I wore out five wetsuits during my training”



Entering the
loch at Balloch

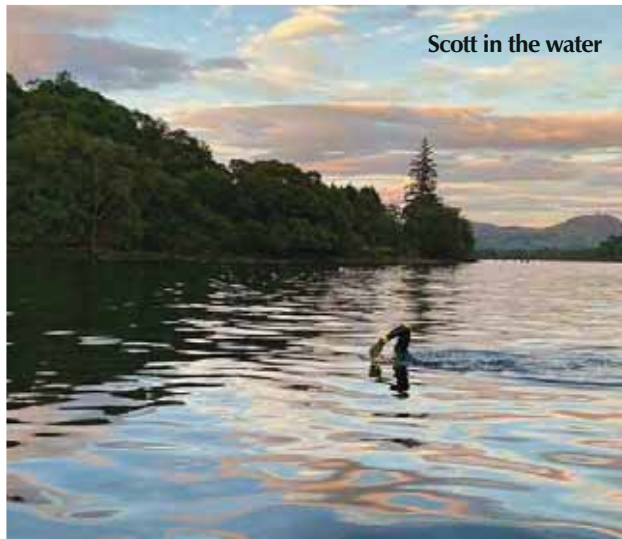


During the swim



Tollcross Centre

Swimming in Loch Lomond



Scott in the water

2020 but the Covid-19 pandemic pushed the challenge forward to 2022.

At 4.45pm on September 9, Scott entered the water at Balloch, West Dumbartonshire. The water temperature was around 17C and he was wearing a wetsuit. He was supported by a boat crew, including one of his sons.

It took Scott 13 hours to complete the first length and, after an eight-minute break on the north shore, he re-entered the water.

He reveals that he didn't look ahead for almost the entire swim. He says, "Looking forwards at what I still had to swim wouldn't have helped me at all. It was only in the last 2km (1.2 miles), when the distance to go was

tangible, that I allowed myself to glance forwards. The rest of the time I looked to the side when I was breathing, or at the support boat.

"I also tried to keep my emotions locked inside me. If you let your emotions get the better of you, it can end up very messy. I focused on keeping my arms going and just ticking over.

"I don't use my legs for the swimming, just my arms.

"It was a very hard challenge – both physically and mentally – but I had committed to raising funds for the charity and that really helped to keep me going."

Scott describes some of the toughest parts of the endurance swim. He says, "The lead-up to the challenge was exhausting. The training was time-consuming and I was very fatigued.

"It is also very hard being in cold water for so long. I wore a wetsuit by a company called deboer, which I was very grateful for. It is a very expensive product, but they gifted it to me when I told them what I had planned.

"I actually wore out five wetsuits from other companies during my training for the event.

"But even in the deboer wetsuit, in the last five hours of my swim, I did feel the cold. It was inevitable, I guess, because I was in the water for so long."

However, there were also some highlights of the swim.



Fundraising for charity

“The last 50 metres were extremely tough – I thought I would never reach the shore”

Scott says, “There were times when the water was still and glass-like, and I relaxed and it all felt so amazing.

“The first night, I was also very calm and relaxed. In the pitch-black, with my earplugs in – I wear them to stop water going into my ear canals – I went into my own zone and all I could hear was the gentle sounds of the boat’s engine alongside me.

“I think I even had some micro-sleeps then, or I was simply so relaxed it felt like that.”

Scott confesses he had further motivation to complete the double loch swim. He says, “I wanted to show my sons that if you work hard at something and give it 100% commitment, you will do it. This was in my mind a lot while I was swimming.”

Despite being able to see the finish point back at Balloch after many hours in the water, Scott says it was the final section of the charity challenge that was the hardest.

He says, “It was stubbornness and sheer bloody-

mindedness that got me to the end. I simply refused to let myself stop. Then came the last 50 metres and I thought I’d never finish.

“I was emotionally so raw and physically spent, and all I wanted was a hug from my wife. I kept trying to spot her on the shore, but I couldn’t until very close to the end. I managed to get out of the water, up the shore to her and had a hug, and then I collapsed.”

Scott ended up in hospital that day with dehydration and a very low blood pressure. Thankfully, he has since made a full recovery.

He says, “Looking back, I am so happy with what I achieved. It took a while for it to sink in, but now it has it is amazing to think I am the first person to complete this challenge.

“But more important is the reason why I set out to do the swim and that was to raise funds for a very special cause. I’ve raised £7431 for The Brain Tumour Charity so far and I am proud of this.”



Cameron McNeish, Scotland's top outdoor writer,

Rebels With A Cause

Why the Alpine purists abandoned the Himalaya, ushering in the age of commercial expeditions and modern competitive climbing



Mount Everest

on how mountaineering has changed over the decades

I'M often asked whether mountaineering has changed in the 50 or so years I've been involved in the sport.

On the face of it, thousands still enjoy the hills and mountains for what they are – a place to challenge yourself, an environment that allows you to appreciate the natural world, an inspiring landscape of beauty.

While nothing in life is constant, the hills and mountains themselves remain largely inviolate and immutable, their spirit of ancient mightiness still attracting those of us keen to learn their secrets.

Indeed, post-Covid it seems there are more people than ever enjoying the outdoors. The lockdowns actually increased awareness of our basic need for nature.

During the crisis we heard a lot about mental health, here defined as those issues caused by the restrictions imposed on us – worry, stress, loneliness and isolation.

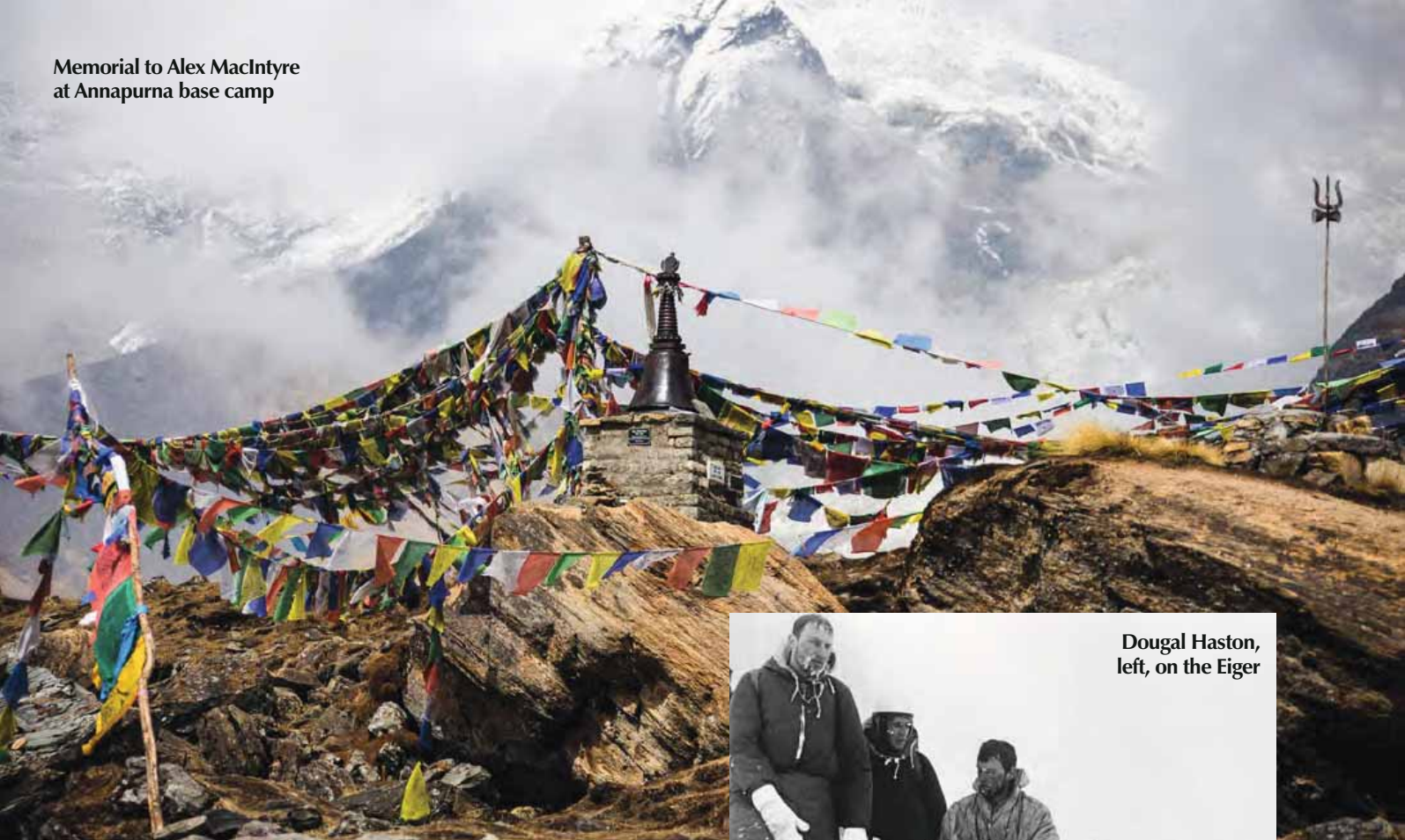
For the majority these conditions were an irritant, but others needed medical treatment to cope. And part of that treatment – now endorsed by the medical profession – is a return to “green places”, a recognition that wellbeing is associated with the natural world.

However, in its most extreme form, mountaineering has irrevocably changed. There used to be a standard progression to the big mountains of the Greater Ranges.

Youngsters would be introduced to the hills, they'd then take up hillwalking, then rock and winter climbing, before progressing to the bigger challenges in the Alps – and then, given time and resources, to the Himalaya.

The years following the first successful ascent of Everest saw many climbers make such a progression – the route followed by British mountaineering greats like Chris Bonington, Doug Scott, Hamish MacInnes, >>





Dougal Haston and many others. And alongside such an illustrious list, it would be wrong not to mention Alison Hargreaves and Julie Tullis – women were starting to prove they could climb just as hard as the men.

Such a progression takes the form of an apprenticeship – the young climber learns by progression and experience until he or she reaches a point where they can be reasonably skilled in a big mountain environment.

However, many of today's Himalayan climbers don't have experience or skills, but they do have fat wallets and can afford to hire others to "guide" them.

From the mid-'70s onwards mountaineering went through its first seismic change. The era of the big military-style expedition, involving hundreds of porters, a large team of climbers and a system of fixed ropes – essentially laying siege to the mountain – came to an end.

This new breed of mountaineers wanted to climb the



Dougal Haston,
left, on the Eiger

Himalaya in the same way they climbed in the Alps – fast, lightweight and purist. Some, like Reinhold Messner, took this kind of lightweight mountaineering to an entirely new level, climbing the 8000-metre peaks without oxygen.

But as mountaineer Brian Hall explains in his book *High Risk – Climbing To Extinction*, this style of climbing on the world's biggest mountains suffered from such a rate of attrition that it changed everything.

Indeed, his book resembles a list of obituaries to the great and good of climbers of the 1970s and '80s, including Brits like Alex MacIntyre, Roger Baxter-Jones, Pete Thexton, Joe Tasker, Paul Nunn and Alan Rouse.

These were the individuals Brian Hall climbed with and knew best, and if his book illustrates nothing else it emphasises the fact that they lived life to the full.

And in doing so, they pushed themselves to such an extent in their mountaineering that they all eventually crossed that fatal line between success and failure.

If one major incident illustrates these points above all others, it was a succession of accidents on K2 in 1986.

I had just been appointed editor of *Climber Magazine* and this was my first major news story, so the details remain firmly etched in my memory.

DID YOU KNOW?

At 8611 metres (28,251 feet) K2 is one of the hardest mountains to climb – around 90 people have died trying to conquer K2 since 1954. It's known as the "Savage Mountain" after climber George Bell said, "It's a savage mountain that tries to kill you," after an expedition in the '50s.



Julie Tullis gets a lift in 1982



Reinhold Messner crosses a glacier

“Risk is removed, danger is nullified”

Between August 6 and 10 that year, five mountaineers died in a storm – including Julie Tullis and Alan Rouse. In the preceding weeks eight others also died in accidents.

One survivor, Kurt Diemberger, stayed with me a few weeks after the incident, but he was a mere shadow of his former self, wracked with frostbite pain and guilt that his companion, Julie, had died because he had encouraged her to attempt the Savage Mountain – the mountain of her dreams. I don’t think Kurt, one of the world’s greatest mountaineers, ever truly recovered from that experience.

Others, like Brian, recognised that this style of mountaineering, at such a level, wasn’t sustainable – they abandoned the “death zone” above 8000m for hard, technical expeditions at lower altitudes.

However, as the Alpine-style Himalayan climbers ignored the highest mountains, a new breed of “climber” began to embrace Everest and, more recently, K2 – the world’s second highest mountain. The day of the commercial mountaineering expedition had arrived.

This breed of climber was inexperienced and wealthy – they had to be, since the financial outlay for climbing Everest is thought to be around £50,000.

But the glory of climbing the world’s highest mountain, even following a queue, looked after like a baby, attracted those adventure seekers for whom money isn’t an issue.

This isn’t mountaineering as most folk know it and, not surprisingly, the greatest mountaineer of all time, Austrian Reinhold Messner, recently said, “What is now going on in the mountains is tourism. It has nothing to do with Alpinism – I wouldn’t go back to Everest if they paid me.”

Tourism it might well be, but it is a major source of income for those living in the Khumbu region of Nepal. Virtually every Sherpa family will have at least one relative working in the industry.

So what other games do climbers play these days? Indoor climbing walls are a place for some to practice during the winter and a physical workout for others who have absolutely no desire to climb outside on rock or snow and ice.

Their popularity led to competition climbing back in the ‘80s and today attracts those with the glint of potential Olympic glory in their eyes.

Bouldering, tackling moves two or three feet above the ground, has proved to be another channel for climbers to avoid risk and danger, and bolt-protected

rock-climbing routes – usually on the sun-drenched crags of the Continent – have never been so popular.

These sub-cultures have several things in common – risk is removed, danger is nullified and discomfort is minimal, once elements of mountaineering that had to be endured and overcome in the pursuit of glory. »



Brian’s book



Left: Climbers at Camp II Annapurna

Below: Doug Scott



“That fatal line between success and failure”

When I began climbing in the 1960s, I didn't know much about the wellbeing benefits of the great outdoors. My teenage years had been spent training for athletics.

My peers were all equally disciplined and passionate athletes, but what attracted me more to the outdoor life was the climbers themselves.

They didn't obsess about calorific intake, they enjoyed several beers in the evening, many smoked, but they were all strong and fit. They didn't train like athletes, but they were focused.

They didn't spend time in gyms, but outdoors in magnificent places like Glen Coe or Ben Nevis.

There was something of the rebel about them – and I wanted part of that.

The Welsh essayist and climber Jim Perrin described his contemporaries in the 1970s in similar terms, saying, “They had a sense of the metaphysical dimension, the spiritual travail of

risky freedom that's played out in the climbing, lived through in the life.”

I'm not sure if today's younger climbers and hikers would fit that description – many of them are more like the disciplined sportsmen of my athletics days.

Today's climbing rebels also have a cause – a shot at a medal or, at the very least, a selfie to prove their achievements.

As to whether mountaineering has changed – essentially there are still thousands of folk of all ages going into the outdoors and climbing, hill walking, paddling a canoe or ticking off the Munros and Corbetts, just as they have always done.

I welcome that sense of continuity and recognise that “the outdoors” – which once defined climbing and hillwalking almost exclusively – now incorporates many pursuits.

It's not unusual to see cars heading north on the A9 with climbing gear in the boot, a mountain bike on the rear rack and a canoe or kayak on the roof.

And I welcome the fact that the natural world is at long last being recognised as vital for our wellbeing – not as somewhere to prove yourself or battle your demons, but as the natural community to which we all belong.

If we can recognise that fact, and care for and protect the natural world as we would our own home, then there's hope not only for the future of mountaineering, but for the planet which sustains us.



FASCINATING FACTS

Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary made the first documented ascent of 8,848.86m (29,031.7 ft) Mount Everest in 1953, using the southeast ridge route.

The base camp for Everest expeditions based out of Nepal is located by Khumbu Glacier.

As of July 2022, there have been approximately 11,346 summit ascents of Everest by 6,098 people.

▲ **High Risk – Climbing To Extinction** by Brian Hall, Sandstone Press, £24.99. S



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Crowd Control

Taking the less travelled path to run the famous Trotternish Ridge

by FIONA RUSSELL

ARRIVING at two popular tourist attractions on a northern peninsula of Skye, it's almost impossible to imagine you could avoid the crowds – unless it was a bleak wintry day or the middle of the night.

And this is not an adventure to be undertaken in deep midwinter – it's one to save for summertime!

Yet, on that sunny Saturday's run along the Trotternish Ridge – and between the famous rock formations of the Quiraing and the Old Man of Storr – my group of friends encounter surprisingly few people.

The key is to skirt around hotspots, although never so far that we can't stare in wonder at them. We climb high, navigating a less trodden route that rewards us with the uplifting sensation that we've escaped to another world.

The Trotternish Ridge – described by many as Tolkienesque – was formed millions of years ago.

When volcanic lava flowed over an underlying bed of sedimentary rock, it gave way and fractured along a north-south fault line. Then massive blocks of rock slid towards the sea – leaving behind the jagged landscape we see today.



The Storr

top tip

Start by taking the 57A bus to Flodigarry, stopping at Dunans.



The result is a long arc of steep cliffs, grassy craters, rolling hills, high crags and rocky pinnacles – and our run provided views that swung from magical and breathtaking to moody, surreal and bizarre.

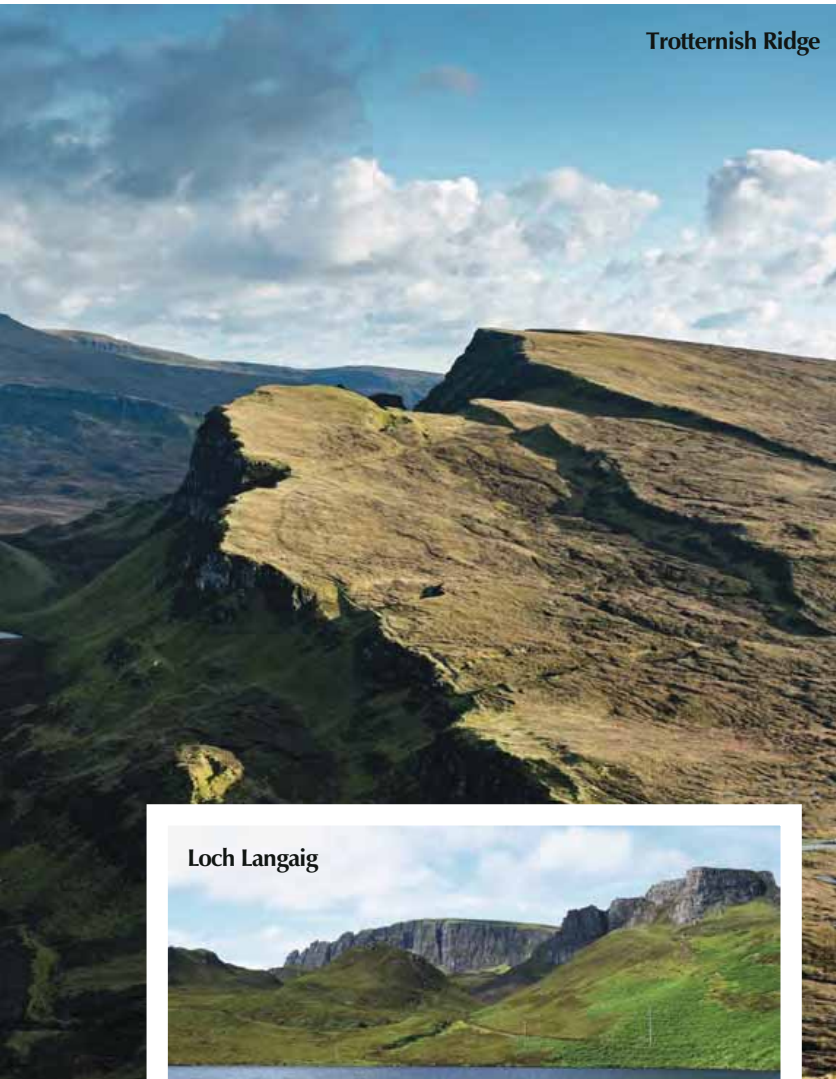
My friends – Katy, Peter, Geraldine, Rachel, Clare and Gail – and I began our adventure at 10am on a windy but bright day from the side of the A855.

We had journeyed by bus from close to our overnight camping location, and now all we needed to do was to run the length of almost the entire ridge south to rejoin the A855 – and hope to catch a bus at either 16.04 or 18.10 to return to the campsite.

The first section was on a quiet trail that climbs steadily to pass the lochs of Langaig and Hasco. Looking east, we saw Flodigarry island and the mainland's Torridon Hills.

Instead of continuing south on an obvious path along the base of high crags – where we would eventually reach the heart of the Quiraing – we climbed on to the ridge.

The rewards for our efforts of running and fast hiking uphill were the suddenly incredible views of land and sea.



Trotternish Ridge



Checking the map

Loch Langaig



Kit List

- ▲ **Running clothing** including waterproof jacket
- ▲ **Trail running footwear**
- ▲ **Rucksack**
- ▲ **Food**
- ▲ **Water**
- ▲ **Spare long-sleeved top**
- ▲ **Insulated jacket**
- ▲ **Waterproof trousers**
- ▲ **Hat and gloves**
- ▲ **Map and compass**
- ▲ **Emergency bivvy bag**
- ▲ **Mobile phone**

“Suddenly incredible views of land and sea”

Further along, and as we made our first enjoyable descent of many, we were treated to a superb vista of the triple summits of the Prison and the Needle.

It was here that our delightful solitude was suddenly – but briefly – disturbed by dozens of visitors who were creating a walking snake from a car park, on surfaced paths with signposts pointing towards the Quiraing.

Carefully, we weaved through the throngs, crossed a narrow road and ran once again into our own peaceful bubble. The next challenge was another long uphill from 250 metres (820 feet) elevation towards a high point 213m (700ft) above.

The ups and downs of the ridge were to become a

familiar feature of the long journey. We slowed to a fast walk for climbs and ran the flatter sections and downhills.

A trig pillar at 465m (1528ft) on Bìoda Buidhe marked our progress and we stopped for a short while to take in a vista over a dramatic escarpment just below and across to Staffin Bay. Behind us was the Quiraing's rocky outline.

A steep descent followed, which was a joy – although slippery in places – and took us to another lower point at Bealach Uige, after which we faced more ascent towards the summit of Beinn Edra at 609m (2000ft).

After several hours of running, I started to lose track of the many undulations. At times, clear skies gave way to swirling cloud and we were buffeted by strong winds. »

The path to the
Trotternish Ridge



The weather added to the atmospheric setting, though we were careful not to stray too close to the ridge's edge.

One peak – known as the Red Fox but officially Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh Ruaidh – looked down on Loch Cuithir and the faint lines of an old railway. It was used to transport a rock, diatomite, that has many industrial uses. Further distant, we spotted the outlines of Raasay and Rona.

The next climb took us to Baca Ruadh at 638m (2096ft) before a drop on rocky terrain to a bealach.

A short, steep ascent led to the summit of Hartaval at 668m (2194ft) in height.

Stopping again to consider the map, we all wondered how much longer it would be before we reached the road again – and which bus might be a possibility.

From Hartaval, the ridge descends to another bealach. Edging around some rocky outcrops, we looked south to see if we could make out a path further on and up

– again! – towards the craggy summit of the Storr. These are the cliffs that sit behind the Old Man of Storr.

We decided to skirt north around the craggiest-looking section of the Storr. We were lucky that the fine weather gave us a good idea of where to go on the ground, too.

Hiking upwards while also traversing north-easterly, we spotted a small cairn that showed us the way to a descent. Then, as suddenly as we had lost a path, we refound another – this time it was clearly well-trodden.

The route contoured south-easterly along the base of a grassy bowl below the Storr and took us close to the impressive 48m (160ft) tall Old Man and Needle Rock.

By now we were racing the clock to try to catch the earlier bus – somehow finding the energy to run down a zigzagging path, again against a tide of people walking to and from the Old Man from a large car park on the A855.

We missed the 16.04 bus by five minutes. However, shortly after, passing climbers offered us a welcome lift.

My GPS watch revealed a distance of more than 27 kilometres (17 miles) and around 1981m (6500ft) of total ascent. My aching legs confirmed these statistics to be very accurate. 



Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh Ruaidh

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OS Landranger Map 23

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Throw The Game

Have a go at disc golf, one of the world's fastest-growing outdoor sports

by JUDY VICKERS

A FAINT metallic chink, followed by a small cheer, tells me that at least one of my opponents has managed to hit the basket somewhere ahead of me through the trees.

I, meanwhile, am busy looking for my disc – a 20cm-wide plastic frisbee – which has disappeared in the undergrowth.

I'm definitely not going to make the par three for this fairway, but at the moment I'll settle for finding my grey circle of plastic – I'll be going for bright red next time.

We're playing disc golf – a sport I hadn't heard of until a few weeks ago, but which is one of the fastest growing in the world.

With just 20 courses, Scotland is way behind world leader the United States, where the sport is huge, or even Estonia and Finland – but more are being added all the time, including a second one in Mull last summer.

This particular course is in East Lothian, in woods next

to Foxlake Adventures at Dunbar. The ReBoot course has three circuits – an 18-hole family-friendly green route, a blue championship trail and a 21-hole red expert course.

Like golf, there is a tee for each "hole" but instead of balls and clubs, players throw their disc around 30 to 40 metres (100 to 130 feet) towards the basket targets – which they try to reach in the lowest number of shots.

Unlike golf, however, the trees here in Bluebell Woods prove to be obstacles which would put any crazy golf course to shame.

I've just managed to round a couple of beeches but, before I can feel too pleased with myself, I catch sight of more experienced players sending discs flying incredible distances with uncanny accuracy.

"Don't worry, those guys are some of the best," says Seamus Scanlon, the genial American owner of ReBoot, comfortably.

top tip

There are lots of videos online where you can learn the best throwing technique.



Left: The disc

Below left: The disc golf course

Below: Throwing into the basket



Originally from Massachusetts, Seamus moved to Scotland 10 years ago with his Scottish wife and family and set up ReBoot. Covid, he says, gave the sport a boost.

And it's easy to see why as it's pandemic-perfect – played outdoors year-round, easy to socially distance and no need to touch anything except your own disc.

"It's just mushroomed," Seamus says. It's also relatively cheap, costing £8 per person to play all day at ReBoot. If you invest in your own disc – at around £10 – there are even cheaper options.

"There are four courses in Glasgow, which are all in public parks – so they are free," he says.

The kids in our party, ranging from 11 to 16, had no problem with the course, with the 16-year-old in particular managing to send her disc flying with considerable force.

In contrast, her mother and I manage to land in bushes and undergrowth and even a stream at one point – although we do, luckily, avoid the lake.

The course is meant to take around an hour to 90 minutes, though we end up taking nearly two.

Not terribly professional, but definitely good value for money and lots of fun. You can even play in the dark on Friday evenings during the winter months with light-up discs and baskets! 



More Information

▲ Disc golf was first played in the 1920s, but was formalised into a sport in the 1970s when the basket on a pole, with chains designed to catch the disc, was invented.

▲ The Scottish Disc Golf Association was formed in 2020 to support the sport and the competitive Quich Tour, a year-long series of events with national champions in divisions. There is also a Scottish Open and Caledonian Open.
www.scottishdiscgolfassociation.co.uk

▲ There are 20 courses around Scotland, including two on Mull, one on Arran, and four in Glasgow.

Pictures: JUDY VICKERS

OUTDOOR SCOTLAND

Gear Guide

We put the latest outdoor clothing and equipment to the test

Happystride "Get Spotted" Unisex Shorts, £36.99



Nadine Stewart

YOU can always tell when a piece of kit has been designed by people that actually run. These unisex shorts from happystride have a genius integrated phone pouch built into the fitted inner short. I love the higher waistband, and they're made from lightweight materials which are moisture-wicking and highly

breathable – ensuring maximum comfort on your run. Keys are kept safe in their own separate pouch, and a large zipped pocket on the back comes in handy for stowing things like gels and snacks when on the move. Plus there are so many fun patterns to choose from!



2



3



4



Keela ViralOff Trousers, £69.95



Rachel McConachie

THESE lightweight trousers got a lot of use during tick season, when it was important to cover my legs but too hot for thick clothing. The soft and light material meant I was able to stay cool and protected. Keela have added a Polygiene ViralOff™ treatment which reduces viruses present on the fabric by 99%

within two hours, and has an antibacterial component that stops the growth of odour-causing bacteria. If, as often happens in Scotland, you get caught in a shower the trousers dry off very quickly and the stretchy fabric feels really comfortable, particularly around the waist.

Trespass Kids Padded Casual Jacket Tuff, £57.99



Catriona Thomson

THIS super cosy, yet hard-wearing jacket is a great choice to see kids through the chilly winter months. It's waterproof, windproof and benefits from ColdHeat insulation which holds in body heat. The hood is adjustable, so it's perfect for going over a winter hat, but can also zip off completely if need be.

The cuffs are elasticated and the hem has a drawcord to keep cold draughts out. There are three good-sized zipped pockets to keep belongings and snacks secure. The jacket's washable at home too – essential for any parents like me, with kids who attract mud and dirt!

Lowa Trek Evo GTX Mid Men's Boot, £210



Robert Wight

A VEGAN-FRIENDLY three-season boot that uses no animal products. They're lightweight and very comfortable – nice padding around the ankle and a plush tongue. Laces lock off before the ankle hooks, giving a very secure fit – perfect for tricky terrain. Great to see grippy Vibram soles, unlike my last Lowa boots. I had

no comfort problems wearing these on a big, multi-hill walk practically straight out the box. However, despite a Gore-Tex inner membrane, I found they let in water on a second outing. I'd expect to go longer before re-proofing. Pricey – isn't everything just now – but can be resoled.



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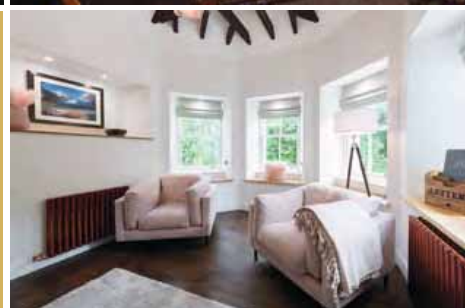
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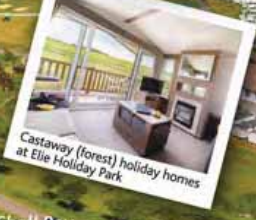
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Shore To Shore

The *Symmetry* ferried Scots from Leith, bound for Argentinian land

by KENNY MacASKILL

NAMES of emigrant ships still resonate in Scotland and among the diaspora. Perhaps the most notable are the *Hector*, which sailed to Nova Scotia in 1773, and the *Metagama* – the first of several vessels taking hundreds from the Western Isles to Canada in the 1920s.

There were numerous others – from virtual coffin ships ferrying those cleared from their lands across the Atlantic through to modern liners carrying “£10 Poms” to a new life in Australia.

But I’d never heard of the *Symmetry* and, when I did, the ship’s story intrigued me. Sailing from Leith, where I was born, and bound not for North America or the Antipodes, but Argentina.

Those who know the area will be aware that the

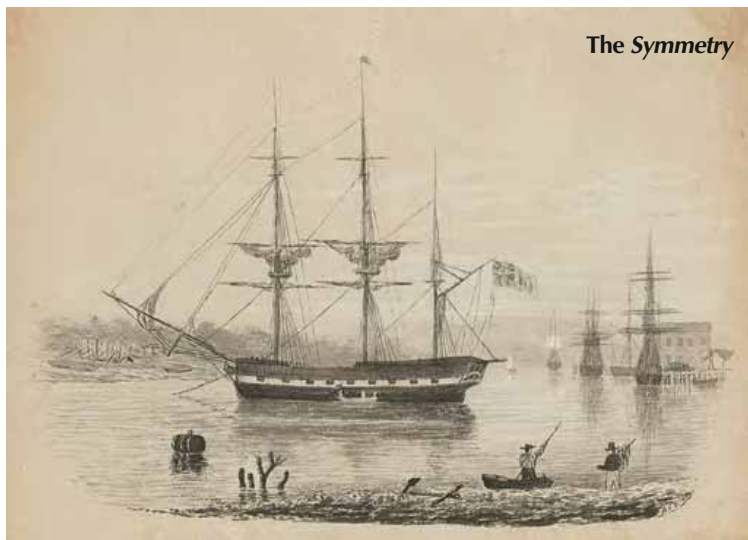
modern port and docks where the *Britannia* is berthed are not the berths from which ships once sailed. They are modern landfill developments – the old port was further back and based around Leith’s Shore, as it is known, now more noted for its bars and restaurants.

But on May 22, 1825, the *Symmetry*, under the command of Captain Samuel Smith and with 45 married couples, 42 single men, 14 single women and 79 children aboard, set sail from Leith’s Shore bound for the shores of Argentina. They were heading to a new country to establish a settlement at Monte Grande, on fertile land south of Buenos Aires.

The story of why they sailed begins far earlier. Argentina had only gained its independence from Spain in 1816, but Scottish merchants had already

“Hardy and industrious, the Scots were faring well when fate turned against them”

The Symmetry



Right:
A nursery
on the
Metagama



been established there for a while – indeed, it is suggested that the majority of the British traders there were Scots.

Most seem to have been entrepreneurial, with a flair that had seen them do well at home, and they used their gains to seek new opportunities abroad.

Fortunes were made from importing products from Britain, and exporting agricultural goods and other natural resources from Argentina.

Firms such as Brown, Buchanan and Co, Dickson, Duguid and McKerrall and Stewart and McCall were all established by the 1820s, along with individuals such

FASCINATING FACTS

As a volunteer, Cecilia Grierson organised an ambulance service and introduced the use of a siren, which were then only used for the fire brigade.

Leith's Shore was the arrival point for Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1561, Charles II in 1651 and George IV in 1822.

Scots tended to travel to Argentina in small groups, drawn by opportunities to own land or find profitable occupations.



The Hector

as Daniel MacKinley and John and William Robertson – and it was the Robertsons who were the brains behind the voyage.

It isn't known where they came from in Scotland, but it was their idea to create a Scottish settlement by purchasing land in Buenos Aires Province.

Passage was voluntary and paid for – though presumably the land was free or provided at low cost.

Some emigrants were driven by changes taking place on the land in lowland Scotland, where many farmers and workers were removed or displaced – albeit without the cruelty or violence witnessed in the Highlands.

Others might simply have sought pastures new and opportunities missing at home.

The majority were farmers or agricultural workers, though they also included clerks, carpenters and masons, as well as a doctor and a surveyor. The Robertsons – or whoever was doing the recruiting for them – were obviously seeking to ensure that a community could be established, and the requisite skills would be available.

Those embarking on a new life were largely drawn from the east of Scotland. There were a few "Mcs" and "Macs" such as Robert McClymont, described as a servant and aged 26 – which likely meant that he was an agricultural labourer or ploughman. A scattering more included a McKenzie, McGregor and a few others.

Most were lowland names like William Grierson, aged 32 and a farmer, travelling with his wife Catherine Kelton and his three children, William, Margaret and Frances. »



Left: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Below: Leith's Shore



“The Scots departed, mostly for Buenos Aires”

Among other names on board were Anderson, Boyd, Steel and Wilson.

They knew little about where they were heading. One of the party with a poetic flair wrote, “They wondered what people the Argentines were, Savages or civilised – colour and figure.”

The voyage appears to have been largely uneventful, as little is recorded. It took three months, though, and no journey of that length, in those days, would be easy.

Two babies were born on the ship, the complexities of which must have been quite staggering. But both children seemed to have been born healthy and arrived in Argentina safely, along with all passengers and crew.

Landing in Buenos Aires, the settlers didn't tarry long. A few headed to Patagonia, but most made their way by bullock cart to Monte Grande.

The country was still developing and, although the war with Spain had ended, struggles between rival wealthy landowners and military figures continued, and conflict with the indigenous peoples was ongoing.

None of those issues appeared to have interfered with the newly-arrived Scots, though their journey

cannot have been easy on what would have been very rudimentary roads. All seemed to be well, and their futures looked bright.

As with those Scots already settled in the new country, they set to work. Hardy and industrious, they were faring well when fate turned against them, and fortune dimmed.

An economic depression across the land hit, but worse was a war that waged between what might best be described as two generalissimos – Generals Juan Manuel de Rosas and Juan Lavalle.

As their struggle raged, it spilled on to the Scots' land and – whether for their own safety or simply to be able to build a future – the Scots departed, mostly for Buenos Aires. There they remained, with many prospering. A school and church were established, and the community grew.

Cecilia Grierson, the granddaughter of one of the immigrants, became the first Argentinian woman to gain a medical degree and was a staunch campaigner for women's rights.

A Scottish community remains in Argentina to this day, some of their forebears having sailed from Shore to the shores of South America. ❸



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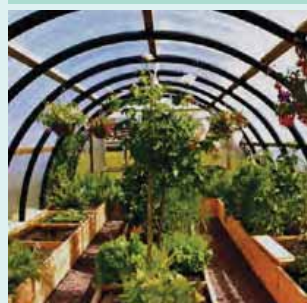
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A Tribute To Keith

Robert Wight remembers *Scots Magazine* regular Keith Fergus

REGULAR readers will certainly be familiar with the work of photographer Keith Fergus.

His stunning imagery and fascinating articles have graced these pages for the better part of a decade.

Until recently, hardly an issue passed that didn't contain his byline. He was a mainstay of the magazine.

Sadly – tragically – Keith died on November 4.

He had been diagnosed with bowel cancer in February and passed away the day before what would have been his 50th birthday.

Keith leaves behind wife Helen and two children, as well as countless friends.

Talented Keith was part of *The Scots Magazine* family. In the almost 10 years that I worked with him, we became friends, mainly through a shared love of the outdoors.

I've great memories of trips bagging hills with Keith in the Cairngorms and other ranges. He was constantly working to expand his picture library, so you'd often have to wear loads of garish, bright clothing and spend a good part of any trip posing like a haddie on a rock or something while Keith took a few shots.

As well the photography and feature articles Keith provided for the magazine, he also helped to establish our annual photography competition and ran reader workshop weekends.

He even worked on a couple of books for us. Keith was a well-known contributor to many other publications, and the author of well over a dozen books and guides.

Keith was a time-served printer to trade but always dreamed of being a landscape photographer. It was around 15 years ago that he decided to go for it, and »



Ben Lomond and the Arrochar Alps from Ben Venue

*“Keith was one of Scotland’s most
naturally gifted photographers”*





bravely followed his heart. It's not an easy way to make a living – but Keith was dedicated and had bucketloads of talent.

He earned every bit of his success and was one of Scotland's most naturally gifted snappers.

It was always a pleasure and an education to watch Keith at work out in the mountains.

I look at hundreds of pictures every week as part of my job – and I can always instantly tell a “Keith” shot. There's just something in the composition and the way he works with the light. It's a signature style as individual and distinct as an artist's brushstroke.

Keith will be missed by us all. By way of a small tribute, we've published some of his work over the next few pages. Take some time to look at them and enjoy them, and think of Keith. 

Pictures: ALAMY IMAGES BY KEITH FERGUS

Loch Torridon



*“It was always a pleasure and an education
to watch Keith at work in the mountains”*





Scotland The Brand

Beefing Up Brits

Edinburgh butcher's solution to army malnutrition



Bovril

BOVIRIL is the beef-flavoured brainchild of Scottish entrepreneur John Lawson Johnston.

"Johnston's Fluid Beef" was originally created in Edinburgh, but later found fame after its large-scale supply to a hungry French Army in the 1870s.

Johnston was a Scottish butcher with a reported interest in dietetics – he later emigrated to Canada to expand his business after his Fluid Beef invention sold so well at home.

During the Franco-Prussian War, a million cans of beef were ordered by Napoleon III to feed his troops after he recognised the poor quality of his soldiers' rations.

Beef was in short supply in Britain, so Johnston's thick, salty meat extract paste was tweaked a little for military consumption and sent in bulk as a

spreadable or drinkable solution to the soldiers' ongoing malnutrition.

This concoction was renamed Bovril in 1886 and reportedly, by 1888, more than 3000 British pubs and shops were serving it up to punters.

The first part of the new name, "Bo", was chosen by Johnston and comes from the word "bos", which is Latin for ox.

The second part of the rebrand was inspired by the word "Vril", a magical, "all-permeating fluid" and energy source featured in a popular science fiction novel of the time, *The Coming Race*.

Today, Bovril is often referred to as "beef tea" as it can be made into a drink.

It's also used to flavour soups and stews, or as a spread on toast. Many liken its appearance and taste to Marmite.

Since 2001, Bovril has been owned and distributed by Unilever UK. 



1863

While working as a butcher, John Lawson Johnston makes his own meat glaze with leftover beef trimmings.



1871

Johnston opens a second factory in Edinburgh and then emigrates to Canada to expand his business.

1886

Johnston's Fluid Beef is rebranded as Bovril.

1900s

The Bovril Company supplies British troops during the Boer War and, later, in the First World War.



1918

People "panic buy" Bovril during the influenza pandemic – adverts claimed it protected against the virus.

1966

Bovril's instant beef stock is launched.

2004

Due to decreasing sales, manufacturers swap the beef stock for a yeast mix, making it vegetarian.

2006

Following public outcry, Unilever reintroduce beef to Bovril.

"3000 pubs and shops sold it"

Hebridean Jewellery

Hebridean Jewellery manufacturing jewellers Est 1974 producing inspired pieces in gold and silver. The jewellery is hand crafted in our workshop in the township of lochdar by the silver sands off the North West coast of Scotland on the Isle of South Uist. Design influences are from the work of the ancient Picts and Celts through to the present environment.



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YOUR OPINION MATTERS TO US AT THE Scots MAGAZINE



DO you have an opinion that you want to share? And do you want that opinion to influence important decisions about your favourite magazine? If so, we would like to invite you to apply to join our *Scots Magazine* reader panel.

As a member of the panel, not only will your views on the features and advertising content in *The Scots Magazine* help shape the future of the magazine, you will also be entered into a monthly prize draw. Each month, one panellist will win £200 and two runners-up will scoop £25 each.

How does it work?

We at *The Scots Magazine* value our content and our readers, so we have partnered with Research & Analysis of Media UK (RAM) to create online research panels. The surveys ask for our readers' opinions on editorial and advertising content in our magazine and website.

Once you sign up to the RAM panel, as a panellist you will be sent online surveys to complete, which will ask what you thought about stories and features – as well as about your awareness of advertisements in the pages of your *Scots Magazine*.

Your opinions and views will then be taken on board by decision makers at *The Scots Magazine*.

What is it like being a member of the reader panel?

Some current members of the reader panel have expressed their enjoyment about being part of the discussions, and encourage others to join because “the bigger cross-section of the public, the better the spread of views”.

One panellist said, “I enjoy being on *The Scots Magazine* Panel. The surveys are varied and enjoyable. I like sharing my views on all sorts of subjects.”

A second panel member agreed that it is enjoyable, and added, “The varied subjects we are asked to comment on are interesting and I like the topical subjects, too.”

“I enjoy taking part in the surveys as it makes me think about how others would look at things.”



How do I sign up?

To take part and give your opinion, and potentially influence editorial and advertising decisions, just scan the QR code and sign up on the RAM website.

Or you can log on to:

www.scotsmagazine.com/readerpanel



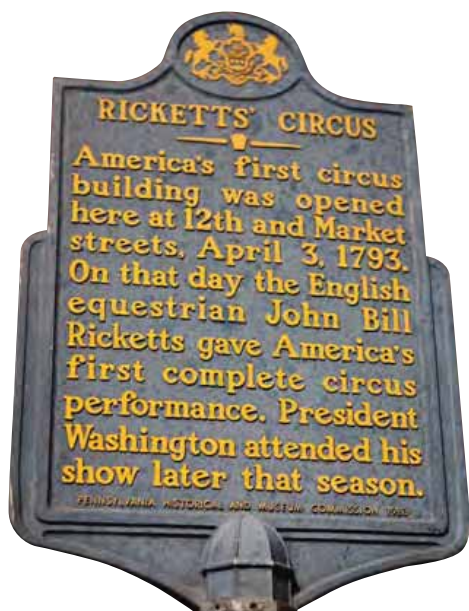
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AYE!

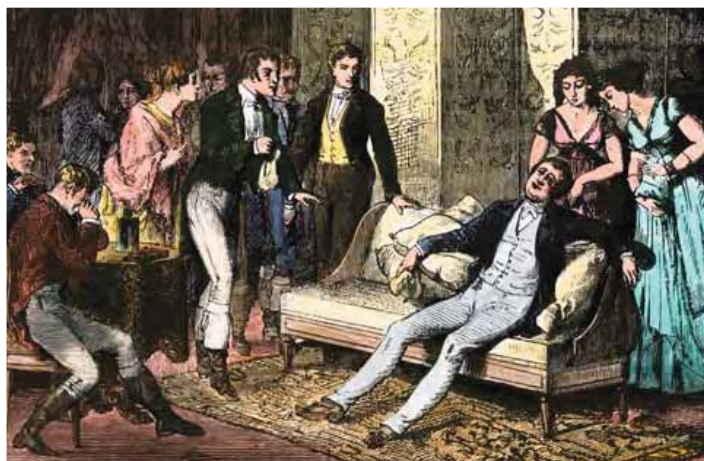
Test your knowledge of Scotland with our fascinating and fun facts!



Curators at Kirkcaldy Galleries are on a mission to discover if a piece of **linoleum** from Sir Paul McCartney's childhood home was originally made in a Fife factory.



John Bill Ricketts, the man who introduced circuses to **America** in 1793, started out in Edinburgh where he had his own company – Circus Royal.



Hans Christian Andersen's guide on a visit to Edinburgh in 1847 was the Scottish obstetrician and inventor of anaesthetic, James Young Simpson. The Danish writer thought he was a great guide, but a less impressive **party** host. He was shocked to see most of Dr Simpson's guests inhaling ether recreationally.

In 1821, Scots **conman** Gregor MacGregor, from Glengyle, invented a country called Poyais and persuaded people to invest in it and emigrate. He raised thousands of pounds, but the unlucky emigrants didn't discover paradise – just a Nicaraguan jungle riddled with disease.



Scotland's first major industrial dispute was the Calton Weavers' Strike in Glasgow in 1787.

Paisley-born *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock* writer, Stephen Moffat, has Harry Secombe to thank for his big break. When his school was used in Harry Secombe's show, *Highway*, Stephen's head teacher dad gave the producer his son's **script** for a children's TV show. They loved it and *Press Gang* – starring Julia Sawalha and Dexter Fletcher, above – was commissioned.

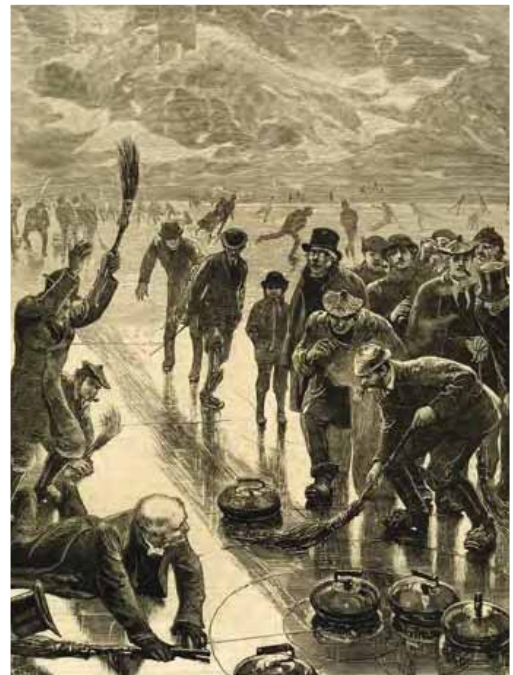


Roses were first commercially **hybridised** by Perth nursery Dickson & Brown in 1793.



During the Second World War, King Haakon VII of Norway stayed in Wormit, Fife. His soldiers painted a sea motif for the king on the walls of the **bathroom**, and the design is still present in the house today.

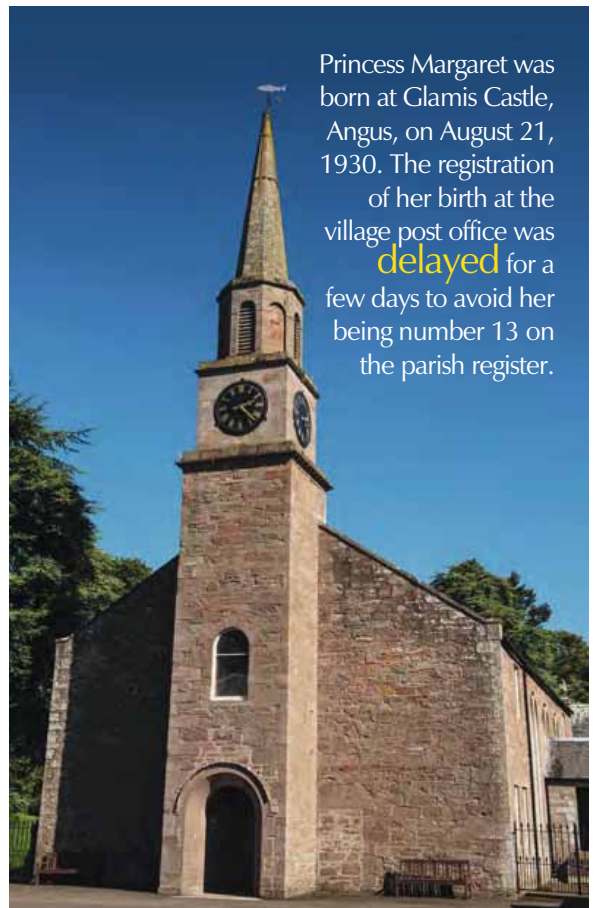
Political correctness isn't a new thing. The North Sea was known as the German Ocean until the early 20th century when **hostilities** with Germany made the name politically unacceptable in Britain.



The world's oldest known curling club was established in **Kilsyth** in 1716. It's still going strong in the North Lanarkshire town today.



The first bagpipes played in space were made in Kilmarnock. American astronaut Kjell Lindgren played *Amazing Grace* on the International Space Station in 2015 for a colleague who had died. He ordered the lightest **pipes** he could find from McCallum Bagpipes in the East Ayrshire town.



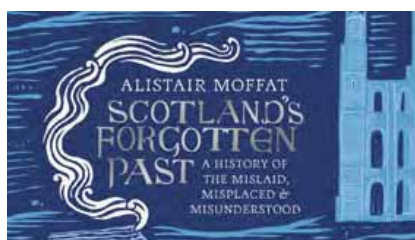
Princess Margaret was born at Glamis Castle, Angus, on August 21, 1930. The registration of her birth at the village post office was **delayed** for a few days to avoid her being number 13 on the parish register.

“Collieshangie” is old Scots for a fight or squabble.

For more stunning Scots facts visit our website: scotsmagazine.com/articles/q-aye-collections

The Great Scottish Quiz – Arts And Culture Round

Put your Scottish knowledge to the test with our very own quiz series. This month, it's the Great Scottish Quiz – arts & culture round! How much do you know about Scotland's contribution to the arts and our ever-expanding cultural scene? Visit our website to find out and discover the full quiz series.



Bookshelf

Scotland's Forgotten Past

Scotland's story is still in the process of becoming known. In his new book *Scotland's Forgotten Past*, Alistair Moffat delves into tales of lesser-known places, people and events. Read our interview online!



Recipes

Traditional Scottish Recipes

From a reviving hot toddy to sweet shortbread and Dundee cake, Scotland has a number of delicious drinks and tasty treats to offer. We've pulled together some of our favourite traditional recipes on our website!



Wildlife

Fascinating Facts – Bewick's Swan

Spellbinding Bewick's swans thrill with their mere presence in Scotland during the winter months. The Bewick's swan is one of seven species of the bird worldwide. Discover five fascinating facts online!

Pictures: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

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